The New Coterie

A QUARTERLY

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EDITORIAL.

LET us begin by thanking Sir Edmund Gosse for devoting one of his *Sunday Times* articles to a book which, to our loss, we should otherwise have probably missed, *i.e.*, *Dans les Sentiers de la Renaissance Anglaise*, by Professor Emile Legouis. We make this polite little curtsey all the more gladly, because as a rule the volumes which Sir Edmund disinters week by week in our amiable but scarcely vivacious contemporary could be read by us, if at all, only during several years of seclusion on a desert island. But we have not waited to be marooned before allowing Professor Legouis to delight us with his taste, his ingenuity and his scholarship (rare combination). What he offers us is an anthology of the best English poems from Sidney to Waller, united by what he modestly calls " un mince filet de commentaire," and accompanied by French translations in verse. We remember how our young and impetuous Imagist friends used to insist that the French always translate foreign poetry into prose, and a whole volume of the unfortunate Verhaeren was turned into English on this pseudo-Gallic principle. For if its advocates had given the matter about half an hour's study, and produced fewer shapeless versicles about sea-foam, rose-leaves and what not, they would have discovered, possibly with strong disapproval, that there are numerous rhymed French versions of foreign poetry. (Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, Rossetti, to take only a few instances, have all been rendered into French rhyme.) And now Professor Legouis provides further and even more strikingly successful examples of the same method. Here is Spenser, reproduced in archaic French, and Donne, most ingeniously made to speak a language which we should have otherwise believed too delicate for his harsh accents; here, too, are Marlowe, Shakespeare, Milton and Herrick. Yes, we certainly are grateful to Sir Edmund Gosse for not permitting us to overlook the work of Professor Legouis.

* * *

Of course, it might have been guessed that the above paragraph was not prompted solely by the desire to be polite to

Sir Edmund Gosse, nor even to praise the attainments of Professor Legouis. The fact is that his book (how, by the way, do they manage to publish it for seven francs?) provides an instructive example of French activity and enterprise. Its preface announces it as the first of a series, the purpose of which will be to present, in a systematic manner, some of the best products of modern European literature, the original texts, as in the first volume, being given with the translation. Here is another proof that France is rapidly becoming less insular, and we shall be interested to see how this series develops. Mr. B. H. Blackwell, it may be recalled, tried a similar experiment with his admirable Sheldonian Series, but unless we are mistaken, he was not precisely encouraged to continue it. We should be surprised, however, if the French series come to a premature end.

* * *

Let us hasten to add that we by no means adopt an attitude of critical devotion to the works of French writers. On the contrary, we are well aware that bluff and snobbery are terms which literary Paris has found itself obliged to borrow. For do not young gentlemen such as Monsieur Jean Cocteau flourish there? And was not Proust compelled to publish at his own expense, and then to pass almost unnoticed for several years? Still, if a French writer of the calibre of C. M. Doughty, for instance, were to die, he would receive at least as much space as the account of a hockey match or meditations on a slump in tallow, chiefly because there would be an abundance of periodicals in which his work could be adequately discussed. There is, for example, that remarkable weekly, *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, which has a circulation of several hundred thousand. In London the only paper at all comparable with it is the *Times Literary Supplement*, which, however, resembles it about as closely as Cromwell Road resembles the Boulevard St. Michel. And of these two thoroughfares we must confess that, with all its drawbacks, we prefer the latter.

* * *

Again, why is it not possible for an English publisher to produce a literary annual such as *L'Ami du Lettré*, the 1926 edition of which we have just obtained for 12 francs? Here is a record of last year's literary production, arranged with the

completeness and precision of *Whitaker's Almanac* or *The Statesman's Year Book*. The classification of the material is thorough without being pedantic. Every branch of literature is dealt with, and the survey even passes beyond the borders of literature, including, as it does, publishers and even booksellers. One of the most commendable features of the volume, which, by the way, is the joint work of a committee of French reviewers, consists of the critical appreciation of new writers, and there are also some lively pages on literary polemics of the bygone year. But we cannot enumerate here all the items which have held our attention in the book. We can only once more ask rather despairingly why such things do not appear in England.

* * *

The answer probably is that in France they take literature seriously, while in England they scarcely take it at all. Why, we do not even possess a proper critical survey of recent and contemporary English literature (as far as it is describable in print). The French have René Lalou's *Histoire de la Littérature Francaise Contemporaine* and Bernard Faÿ's brief but excellen *Panorama de la Littérature Contemporaine*. (The Germans, we may mention in passing, have quite half a dozen such books, the most elaborate of which is Albert Soergel's *Dichtung und Dichter der Zeit*, a work in two volumes, containing 1,760 pages and 687 illustrations.) And while we are on this humiliating topic, we may as well admit that the best book on the modern English novel is Abel Chevalley's *Le Roman Anglais de Notre Temps*, with Walter F. Schirmer's *Der Englische Roman der Neuesten Zeit* a fairly good second. The moral which we draw from all this is that a depreciated currency is not the worst catastrophe which may befall a nation—a conclusion which can be confirmed by a perusal of H. L. Mencken's *Americana*.

* * *

We will now proceed to praise an English book, and we will praise it highly. The book in question is *Whom God Hath Sundered*, by Oliver Onions, which Martin Secker recently issued at 7/6. When *In Accordance with the Evidence*, *The Debit Account* and *The Story of Louie* (the work of a single year !) first appeared, they aroused in us an enthusiasm which has

survived until now, and which accordingly made it possible for us to re-read the trilogy in its new one-volume form. It is particularly interesting to observe the skill with which the author has dovetailed the three parts into one, thus achieving a triumph of technique. But apart from that, we have here one of the most remarkable modern works of imagination produced by an English writer, and perhaps by any writer. If Oliver Onions were a Russian whose novels had just been translated into English, he would no doubt become the subject of much high-brow jabber. Dostoyevsky's name would probably crop up in reference to him, and then perhaps it would be announced in one thousand five hundred words or so that he has written a variation on the theme of " Crime and Punishment." So he has. But the odd thing is that, having accomplished this (and, indeed, much more than this) he still remains unknown to a large section of the intelligent reading public, and in a recent book on the English novel of to-day by a well-known London critic he is not even mentioned. Why this should be so, we cannot pretend to understand, still less to explain. For he has written such novels as *Good Boy Seldom* (what English novel portrays the rise and fall of a self-made man more convincingly than this ?) ; *Mushroom Town* (what English novelist has displayed a shrewder understanding of the Welsh ?) ; *Little Devil Doubt* (has the big newspaper syndicate ever inspired more crushing satire ?) ; *Widdershins* (what contemporary writer can improve on this treatment of the supernatural ?). And so on. We might fill another page with similar notes and queries, without doing complete justice to Oliver Onions. But, to be sure, the compilers of social snippets do not comment raptly upon his hair-oil and fancy waistcoats.

* * *

We take this opportunity of expressing a somewhat belated gratitude to certain artists and publishers who generously made it possible for the first number of The New Coterie to contain material, the use of which would otherwise have been beyond our means.

PANINI.

THE king was performing a sacrifice, that the Gods might bless his war with victory. All his subjects gave their offerings, too ; for, as the saying is, " As the king, so the subjects." The servants dedicated their service to the Gods. Farmers brought their finest produce: what can the Gods receive better than the best They have given ? Merchants brought the pick of their treasures : filmy muslins, gorgeous and dainty silks, dazzling gems of incredible size, delicate carvings in emerald and ivory in caskets of sandal wood inlaid with landscapes in rich coloured agate, and even the hoarded money in their coffers, to be given to beggars as gifts to the Gods : for the Gods being everywhere, are also in the beggars. Mechanics offered their greatest inventions : ingenious and amusing toys, fit for child as well as sage ; wondrous machines for every purpose, however great or however small ; intricate systems of crystal lenses, to see all things from an atom to a star. Artists brought their paintings and sculptures, divine as the Gods represented. Feats of strength and skill were shown, marvels of speed and suppleness, mysteries of magic and jugglery ; and the spectators gave their joy, their glad contribution to the sacrifice. Even those who were not there, doing their daily work, dedicated it to the Gods.

Panini was to have remained at home, minding the house ; for he was the fool of the family, and the king's sacrificial hall was not the place for him. But he begged hard to accompany his three brothers there. Had he not, after years of toil, that very day learnt in their proper order the names of the twenty-seven lunar constellations ? " Please let me go with you, and offer my first achievement to the Gods."

Patanjali, his eldest brother, smiled. He was a philosopher,

the most learned in the kingdom ; and poet, grammarian, and mathematician besides, to the king.

" A little knowledge," said he, " is a dangerous thing. Safer far is ignorance. Silence, made by the Creator fit cover over ignorance, fails to hide small knowledge. So come with us by all means, but try not to air your knowledge. The Gods will be there at the sacrifice. Who knows They may not bless you yet ? "

So they all went to the sacrifice, and the third brother offered an exquisite painting on Chinese silk, shining with the radiance of its theme, the smile of Uma. The sight of that wonderful painting sent a thrill of joy through all the beholders. The very Gods became suddenly conscious of Their own bliss. Strains of heavenly music were heard. It was the second brother singing a hymn to Uma's smile. A hundred and eight verses he sang, holding men and Gods entranced. When he ended, Patanjali discoursed, symbolising in the Goddess's smile the quest of the universe, cessation of sorrow, and eternal joy.

The king gave them suitable rewards and turned to Panini. " What gift have you brought to the Gods ? There is wisdom shining in your face. Make your offering, and may the Gods bless you greatly, as you deserve ! "

Utterly confused, the boy began to recite the names of the lunar constellations. " Ashwini, Punarwasu, Krittika——" He realised his mistake, and stopped.

The king smiled, and all laughed. The brothers were dismayed, but Patanjali was serene.

" The king's smile is radiant and joy compelling," said he, " even as Uma's smile ; and the occasion for joy is great, as the Gods have rewarded our sacrifice with a blessing through my brother's mouth."

He craved permission of both his brother and the king to explain the blessing. All became silent, and listened in awe.

" The Gods bless you with Ashwini—a vast army of cavalry ; and again, Punarwasu, with great wealth ; and They bless you to be victorious in war, like the Son of the Krittikas."

Humbly, the king prostrated himself before the bewildered boy, and showered gifts about his feet.

The sacrifice over, the brothers went home. Once there, Patanjali said to Panini :

" Brother, thank the Gods They gave me wit enough to-day to save the honour of the family. They may not always be so kind. Henceforth remember that in an assembly of the wise, the fool's best ornament is silence."

Panini bowed his head in shame. " I know I am a fool," he said; " I forgot your advice,—and now I have even forgotten the names of the constellations " ; and he bewailed his ignorance.

Patanjali comforted him : " Knowledge of ignorance is the beginning of wisdom. May the Gods bless you with the ripest of it ! "

" How can I attain to wisdom ? Teach me. I will sit at your feet and learn."

" No, little brother. All these years, have I not tried to teach you, and failed ? The Gods alone can teach you. Pray to Them."

" Where shall I seek for the Gods ? "

" The Gods are everywhere, but if you would find Them, go into the solitudes of a forest, and look within yourself."

II.

So Panini went into the solitudes of a forest and looked within himself with his mind's eye, so intently that he became oblivious even to space and time and all that happened therein. The war had been fought and won, and the king had proclaimed another sacrifice ; but Panini knew it not.

One day he felt a strange impulse. It seemed to come from everywhere. The wind seemed to whisper strange words in his ears. The music of the river seemed full with vague suggestion. The whole forest seemed to communicate familiar but unknown thoughts. A new language seemed to come from every grain of dust. He could almost grasp the meaning in the language of the animals. The sunlight playing through the leaves made patterns strangely intelligible, yet incomprehensible.

Fed by all these influences, like the forest which had evolved itself out of the earth and air and water and light, his thoughts took form. Light dawned within his mind, and he knew that the Destroyer, with the Fire of His Third Eye had set his mind aflame and burnt his ignorance to ashes. " Arise and go back to the king," came the message from everywhere. " Out of his sacrificial fire shall come wisdom for you and the world."

So Panini went again to the sacrificial hall. His brother was showing his masterpiece, a vast painting covering the walls, representing the fall of leaves from roses. As they saw that sad picture, men and Gods sighed with the plants that were mourning their loss ; but in the sadness was a shadow of joy as well, like the promise of fruit in the falling petals of a flower. To the falling rose leaf the second brother sang a song, a thousand and eight quatrains of sweet melody, holding men and Gods entranced. Then Patanjali followed with a discourse on the painting, symbolising in the rose leaves the heroes who fell in the war, and the glad future they ensured for humanity. And he told how the fall of a petal foretold not the fruit only, but the seed as well, wherein lay the potentialities of a forest. Out of the original seed had the whole universe been evolved by the Ancient Poet ! Clear, then, was the path for the human to attain the divine : out of the little create the great ! Out of a rose leaf human genius had evolved a vast picture and a great poem : the step from that achievement was small, out of an atom to make a universe ! Thus for eight and twenty days he spoke, and men and Gods marvelled at his eloquence and wisdom.

When he finished, the king rewarded them and got ready to invoke the Gods to accept the completed sacrifice. But ere he could move, a girl sprang out of the sacrificial fire and began to dance. Such dancing had never been seen before. Symbols got so strangely mixed that as movement succeeded movement, order seemed the more to confuse chaos, and the dance bewildered to the verge of the ludicrous. Suddenly she beat the tambourine ; and out of it seemed to issue the letters of the alphabet arranged in groups so fantastic that the audience broke as one into laughter.

Then suddenly they remembered the previous sacrifice, when they had laughed at Panini, and all became silent at once. They became conscious of Panini repeating those sounds.

His face was shining with the creative glory of the Sun, with the tender bounty of the Moon, with the destructive wisdom of the Fire of the Third Eye of Shiva Himself. Dazed with awe they listened silent, still, uncomprehending.

Patanjali went and prostrated himself at his brother's feet, unheeding all protests, saying :

" It is not to my younger brother I bow, but to the Destroyer of ignorance, your Teacher and mine. I would sit again

at His feet, at the feet of you, His pupil, and learn through you the meaning of that grouping of the letters."

" It is the key to the mechanism of language," said Panini ; and, based on that grouping of the letters of the alphabet, he constructed before them a whole system of grammar. The eight chapters of it took no more than four and twenty minutes to recite. It was so simple while it was being shown ; but when Panini finished, even Patanjali found he could not reconstruct it : it was too intricate !

Perplexed, Patanjali laid his robe of office at the king's feet, saying, " I am worthy of it no longer. I thought I was wise, and so did all of you ; but I was a fool, and you were fools with me. Like the Gods before Uma taught them, we thought our genius great. The little we found we magnified, as with a system of mirrors and lenses ; and the magnitude we saw we believed was our own. Such was my brother's painting of the falling leaves of a rose, such my brother's song to the rose leaf, and such, alas, my own discourse as well : vast elaborations of little themes, mountains made out of motes ! We forgot these systems of lenses could condense as well as enlarge ; could lure a landscape into a memory, focus the sun to a dazzling point ! Once again through my brother's mouth have the Gods blessed our sacrifice with a quintessential blessing that has dazzled our intellects into seeing our own blindness !

" But knowledge of folly is the beginning of wisdom. Let me sit at your feet, O little brother whom I called a fool ! Make me wise enough to interpret your work ! "

Thus Patanjali came to write his great commentary on the Ashtadhyayi of Panini.

SUNDAY ON THE FISH WHARF.

STARCHY tin sky.
Squat drifters patched with blue.
Flesh-coloured fish slip from the swaying swills.

Beneath the low-hung market roof
From bell-sweet Hebridean tenors
Dangle the clamorous and pellucid beads
Of Sabbath-solemn harmony.

I see once more the tree-tall shrubs
Set as a mimic stage for giant marionettes,
And, far withdrawn, in long white shapely stone,
The wood-nymph juggler, monstrous with unreal birds,
Leaping like flames of ice
In the tepid air.

Oh! Who believes? . . . believes?
Motor-boat struts and cuts and cleaves.

REASONING ALSO IN THE MARKET PLACE.

THE golden-pointed, church-clock clown
Vacantly sniffs the hissing mordant steam.

Each curl of wind, a tinkling bell,
Trips in fugal counterpoint.
"Turn to God!" The wire booths creak:
Packed, with tiled bronze rippling over them—
The crowd . . . Deft moonbeams flashing
On foam-tipped seas . . .

"Oh, Love Divine
Calling to men!"—The anguished face
Glows white with ecstasy. "Repent! Repent!"

The crowd, I say, eats chips.

WILFRED CHILDE.

THE CURRANT GARDEN.

(*For Peter Quennell.*)

IN a garden under the cloud-crested hill
The Child hid in the currant-bushes growing
There in a bosky thicket choked with grass ;
The fruit hung down like necklaces of beads,
Wine-red, dull black and white as clouded foam ;
The bare blue sky swooned out beyond the hill,
There was a silence on the currant-garden
Glamourous with the beauty of all-pervading summer,
And golden insects, myriad-coloured flies,
Danced like motes in the amber flooding beam
Of bland eternal noon ; it was an hour
When the very white clouds resting on the hill-top
Seemed almost incapable of any motion—
With light breasts poised over the burning grass
Swaying, they rested, their bright silver wings
Hovered as swans, quivering in the furnace
Of the Sun's radiant beauty, candidly clung
And blossomed on the sheer crest of the world,
A bed of big-bloomed lilies, round and mild.
But here below amid the tangled bushes
Of the decaying orchard rested the Child,
Fingering the picture-book whose massive pages
Showed aëry cities, parallels of gold
Never meeting and persons clad in scarlet
Riding in an infinite procession
Into a land of music rained from stars
That in the painted zenith poised and swung ;
No single note from any poignant bird
Broke the blue crystal of the tingling hush,
And deep as dreams, deep the desire of the noon,
Deep, deep the marvellous noon's desire,
Delicately trembling in a web of light,
A rainbowed net, a woof of Dryad gold,
Having caught at last the hurrying world
And pinioned it into quiet and tamed it
To be its obedient minion and its slave,

Give out its inner music at last, even Silence,
Sweetest of all the secret Syren songs
Within its teeming heart. Certainly the world
Is an obstinate creature and being full of music
Utters its easiest musics readily,
Whether it be a medley of wild noises,
Or lovelier harmonies—but last of all,
Unwillingly, bashfully, with reluctance,
And often suffering, it issues Silence,
The mother of the voices of the gods,
The virgin Nothingness that is the parent
Of surges deeper than the sting of sounds,
Of melody no nerve, no flesh can hear,
Nor the brain register its depthless beauty.
Such a Silence brooded over the world,
Child of the world and its true mother also,
Offspring and generatrix of all life ;
And still the Child amid the parching leaves
Of grey-green bushes and the jewelled fruit
Turned over the pages of its painted book,
And beheld gods fighting and the Sibyl dreaming,
And the birth of a myriad trancèd constellations,
Beautiful, naked as the dew on flowers.

THE PERUVIAN DREAM.

THE Child dreamed, though the snow lay still outside
In the cold North and scarce one snowdrop grew,
Nor any single swallow cleft the blue ;
His spirit had gone forth beyond the tide
Of oceans even by mightiest ships unploughed,
To some ethereal Eldorado throned
By vast pacific waters, jewel-zoned
'Mid tropic isles that to her sceptre bowed.
There violet mountains rose to taintless skies
Beyond deep vales of million-coloured flowers,
Where free as air an angel-race did run,
And the mild Inca heard through breathless hours
In the gold arches of his Paradise.
The chanting of the Virgins of the Sun.

IN PROVINS.

"SO he ran out, knocking down the brigadier—
Mince alors ! " said the officers to each other
In the hotel at the end of their Sunday meal, *fumant la pipe*.

And rain ran in new ditches
Beating on sooty walls where the ramparts are falling
In Provins, ville-haute—with the gale up the winter's watery veins
In clipped crooked fields—wind in the nerves of winter,
(The black branches)—in the streets' draughty funnels.

Next morning the lieutenants cantered out in clear sunlight
Past the Jardin Publique, a place of shallow waters rising.
What is left of old carvings ? seamed fragments in an odour of violets,
And from a café crept the unexplained scent of frezias.
Sun descends on the streams, travelling down the green water.
Against écarlate de Gand and bleu de Nicole they matched the *ners*, noir de Provins,
Famous cloth, fast-dyed in the Durteint, hard river-water.
And Abelard
In these level meadows for two years was teaching,
And Thibaut leaned
From the high-town over a murmuring valley.
Thibaut, lord, and love-singer, who ordered the walls and a monastery.
Word and gesture all one now, dispersed by the unrecording wind,
Other footsteps . . . not those . . . patterning the soundless mould.

Dome on the sunset, blue dome on high hill-distance
Where the ramparts are falling—only a Caesar's tower
Catches the wind still, and the rain's minute deteriorations.
The moon collects on puddle-water—
Lilac and prune-flush, suffusions then shadows of nightfall,
Wing-rustle in quickset . . . and suddenly that hunting-music,
Delaying chords of horns, suspended chords
After silence.

All day I have had memories coming back at me with their
gesture of meetings and partings,
And the sense of some moment in this place that is a
memory to be.

By the roadside . . . what's past—then the *now* with its hotel
bedroom
Where one traveller replaces another (one traveller the abstrac-
tion of all—)
Time's seasons or shadows put forward, remembered in the
wallpaper—
Sad spring still frigid, summer with flies, then the harvests
beyond the octroi,
And the long sheet of winter wrinkled and knotted with branches.

After the soldiers—shuffle and stamp in clotted sawdust—
the commercial gentry :
" *Ah oui . . . Splendeurs et Misères? mais mon vieux,*
Jean Cocteau est plus de notre temps."

A GIFT OF DEATH.

MARIA came downstairs from her father's bedroom and in her usual quiet and melancholy way said to her aunt: "He's gone."

Aunt Ann looked up from her Bible and opened her mouth wide with excitement. Then she searched for her handkerchief and wiped her tearless old eyes.

"Going before me they all are," she moaned in Welsh.

Maria took a piece of knitting from a drawer and sat down before the fire, as was her custom in the evening. She began to knit carefully, though she was weary from much watching and nursing of the dead man.

But her aunt looked at her in amazement and displayed a sudden energy.

"Shift yourself, Maria fach," she exclaimed. "No time for knitting to-night. Get you the sheets for the windows. And laid out he must be."

Maria did not move. Though her body was limp with weariness, there was a glow of bitter joy in her. Her mind seemed suddenly freed of hot, tight bands. She muttered to the old woman:

"A strict man was my father, Aunt Ann. Stricter than a preacher was he, and every day was a Sunday for him. Like a Sunday-school, too, he made life in this house. There's hated him I have sometimes. Mam was as bad, also. A horrible life have I had between the both of them." And as Aunt Ann made sucking noises of distress in her teeth, she continued, "The truth it is. Now that they are dead, judge them I can. An old maid they have made me, and no pleasures have I had. The Bible for breakfast, dinner and supper it's been. There's awful religion makes some people."

She spoke in a hostile voice, quivering with self-pity. Her mind looked with anger upon the corpse upstairs. She wanted

to cry, but no tears would come. Her large heavy face hung sullen and proud over her knitting. She went on :

" Now my best years I've spent working for them, left I am to be lonely for the rest of my life. If they had let me go out, there's chances to marry I might have had ! "

" Tut, tut," Aunt Ann observed, " only thirty-three you are, and now that he has gone, look out for a man you can. Capable you are, Maria, and steady and a good cook. Not like these young flighty bitches of to-day. Plenty of men there are who want a woman like you for a wife."

Maria continued knitting silently. Thirty-three ! And ugly and stout and staid. What man would want her now ? She would not know how to please a man, she had never known any but her father. There had been nothing in life for her but work, religion and a short holiday with relatives in a safe country village. No cinemas, no holiday in Aberystwyth like Maggie Jones had, no dances, no young man bringing her home at nights and kissing her in the darkness of the doorway, as she had seen. . . .

An agonising fear possessed her as she went on steadily knitting. How much she had missed in life ! Dimly she was aware of the great passionate world outside. And now it was too late for her to enjoy its delights. But was it ? She said :

" Think I'll sell this house, Aunt Ann, and move to the seaside."

" Don't you squander the money your father has left you now," answered the old woman angrily. " And no thought you take of me." She cried tearlessly into her handkerchief. " A hard old cow money will make you, Maria. Know your nature I do." And she crept off to look at the dead man.

Maria's pale blue eyes began to sparkle softly. The thought of her money and the power it meant brought again a glow of joy to her stout body. Only she wished she were younger. And she knew she was ugly.

" He has set," Aunt Ann said, coming from the bedroom. " Beautiful and Godly is his face. Now, Maria, which undertaker shall we have ? "

" John Jones," Maria answered. " Cheaper than Thomas Evans he is."

" Go on. An old churchman is he. Thomas Evans respectable people have. Smarter are his carriages, too."

" John Jones I will have," said Maria firmly. " I was in school with him, and always very nice he was."

" A miserly old bachelor he is," Aunt Ann remarked spitefully. " And looks it."

Maria went to get the white bedsheets, and she shrouded the front windows with these, the sign that death has come to the house. Ten minutes afterwards began the procession of neighbours to view the dead man. Aunt Ann presided over the corpse, and Maria sat downstairs, listening ironically to the sympathy that was offered her.

" But there's comfortable you'll be," observed one woman. " This nice house all yours, and a heavy bag he must have left behind him. Always careful he was, Maria, making himself a miser for you."

Maria lifted sardonic lips in a cold smile.

" Earned all there is I have. But there's nosey you are, Mrs. Howells. Always thinking of money, too."

" Ho, like you then. And there's unnatural you look, Maria. Not a tear for your poor father. Sitting there like a block of ice and being nasty."

And all the neighbours remarked outside on her cold, tearless state. But Maria sat still in her contemptuous hostility, secretly enjoying this publicity and interest in her. She felt independent now.

And that night she got into bed with a sensuous abandonment to the cool depths of the sheets. A spring of strange ecstasy seemed loosened in her body by this chill presence of death in the house. Sudden waves of warmth crept through her blood, and hungrily she laid her hands over the throbbing of her breasts.

Surely there was someone in that wonderful world outside who would desire the passion that burned in her !

* * *

The next morning Maria sent Aunt Ann for the undertaker. The old woman went off with bitter remarks, but consoled a little by the gift of twenty shillings to buy a new black skirt and bonnet for herself.

" Disturb his rest it will, being buried by John Jones," she complained. " There's shabby his old carriages are. Ashamed to ride in them I'll be."

The undertaker came back with her, and she took him up

to measure the corpse. Afterwards he came down to the living room, where Maria waited.

" Peaceful he looks, Miss Morgans, dear me," he began.

" More peaceful than you will look when you are dead," said Maria with a sudden arch glance of her pale eyes.

" How now ? " he asked, cocking his little head. " A good life I've led so far."

" A cunning old rascal you were in school," she continued archly, dusting a chair for him. " Sit down now and come to business."

He was a little man, fussy and nervous, bird-like. He rubbed his hands, then placed them on his thin boy's knees, his head cocked aside. Uselessly he tried to practise the sorrowful and dignified bleakness of the undertaker's personality. He was too quick and fussy, like a brisk bird, his face too sharply cunning. So he was not the success that tall, sombre Thomas Evans, his rival, was. Thomas Evans was a dignified adornment to a funeral, but John Jones fluttered about his duties like a young tom-tit. Maria looked at him and laughed.

" Elm or oak would you like for the coffin ? " he began importantly, but bridling up red and angry beneath Maria's laughing glance.

" Quote prices, John Jones," she said.

She sat opposite him and, her thick lips thrust out meditatively and her eyes watchful, discussed prices with a shrewd suspicion that compelled his respect, beneath his anger. After many calculations, he said :

" Not more than twenty pounds will everything cost."

Maria shook her head.

" Too much. Thomas Evans would do it cheaper than that."

He got up from the chair furiously.

" A proper old Jew you are, Maria Morgans. There's bad it looks for you to be so miserly over a funeral."

Maria rose, too, angry scarlet in her cheeks.

" A robber of poor orphans you are," she shouted. " Taking advantage of a fatherless girl ! "

" Poor orphans ! " he scoffed. " A fine old pile your father collected, I'm sure. And little better than a parish funeral his daughter wants to give him." He snapped his fingers at her furiously.

Maria gazed at him slowly, her lids lowered, arch again.

" I like to see you angry and upset," she said. " More of a man you seem then. But too fussy you are for an undertaker."

" An insulting daughter has a respectable man left behind him," he exclaimed. " There's snotty your tongue is ! " But remembering his declining business, he added calmly, " Now, now, Miss Morgans fach, be sensible, and a grand funeral I will arrange for nineteen pounds ten."

Maria called her aunt downstairs and asked her to prepare a cup of tea for the undertaker. She also took out her best fruit cake and gave him a large slice of it.

* * *

Rain poured from a black and vicious sky the day of the funeral. This angered Maria, who had squandered a great deal of money on a smart black dress and a striking hat.

" See they shall that even shabby Miss Morgans has got taste," she had told herself, running amok in the shops. But the rain upset her.

" I will have to go and buy a raincoat," she said angrily to Aunt Ann, the morning of the funeral, " and a new umbrella. There's unlucky I always am. Miserable the day is going to be."

But in spite of the rain a respectable crowd gathered outside the house. Maria observed the people from the window of the front bedroom while she waited for the moment to descend, and was mollified. Downstairs the house was full of bustling relations and friends, all speaking at once, until the minister raised his voice for prayer and in the usual sing-song Welsh style recited the virtues of the deceased.

Maria stood before the wardrobe mirror, quite filling it, and put the last touches to her mourning but up-to-date person. She had been unable to decide about the black beads. But finally she slipped them over her head and left the lovely pear-shaped ear-rings which were to match. Those she would put on after the funeral.

When she was called, her face paled a little and her heart beat loudly. They had begun to sing as the funeral formed outside. But after glancing again at her fashionable figure in the mirror she descended, proud and dignified, into the expectant crowd below and sailed calmly, like a black ship, through the avenue of peering women's faces, disappointing them with

her untearful eyes and look of cold ease. No, her eyelids were not red even, and she sat composed and queenly in her corner seat, proudly unconscious of the women's disgusted glances and comments. Aunt Ann followed Maria into the carriage and sank, a heap of sobbing black grief, at her side. Then came the distant cousins, their washed faces resigned, but ashamed, as though they concealed something unworthy.

The rain fell and the wind blew fiercely at the graveside. Maria, reposing on the arm of a cousin, stood large and meditative under her new silk umbrella and, staring at the tossing chrysanthemums, thought bitter thoughts of her bleak youth. Ah, but she would have a good long holiday when all this was over. And she wouldn't sell up and live away—she would not be known in another place. She would buy lots of clothes and lead fashion in the Valley, astonishing her friends. She saw herself walking down the aisle of the chapel, wonderful, envied.

But as the people sang the last sad hymn she thought again of the joys that had been withheld from her, and at last wept, to the great relief of Aunt Ann.

After she had taken her seat in the cab, the undertaker appeared with a rug and there was an affectionate expression on his face as he laid it over her knees.

" Cold it is in this cab," he said. " How well and brave you keep up, dear Miss Morgans ! "

" Thank you, John Jones," she replied with dignity. " A shilling extra for the rug, I suppose ? "

As they drove back Aunt Ann turned to her angrily :

" There's like a block of wood you've behaved. Spoilt the funeral for me you have. Ashamed I've been."

" Dear, dear," said a sympathetic cousin, " cried she did when we sang Calfaria."

" Tut, when everything was nearly over. There's talk they will in the chapel."

" I do not care," said Maria proudly, " what they say. And an old hypocrite you are, Aunt Ann. Know you well I do." And she added jeeringly, " Only jealous of my money you all are."

" Now then, Maria fach," wheedled penniless Aunt Ann, " only thinking of your good name I was."

Maria went upstairs when they arrived at the house, to take off her pointed shoes, which hurt her corns. A crowd gathered

downstairs, waiting for the meal that was to end the ceremony and discussing with hungry voices the details of the funeral. Maria unlocked a drawer, an excited little smile on her face, and drew forth a box of face-powder, which she had purchased since the decease of her father. Delighting in this new sin, she dabbed a little on her shining nose and leathery cheeks. Afterwards she fixed the ear-rings, fingering them tenderly. Then, exultant and her neck stiffened like a queen's, she stepped on to the landing, ready to descend in glory once again.

But the voices of women talking softly below in the passage reached her, and she stopped to listen. She had heard her name spoken.

" Always foolish and half-soaked was she though. But, ach y fi, disgraceful she was to-day. Flaunting her disgusting clothes as though it was a wedding."

" You'd think she'd have cried though from being grateful for the nice lot of money he's left her."

" She'll want it, too, being an old maid. Not much chance is there for her now. Not the sort men like is she. Staid and peevish and plain."

" Like someone funny in a pantomime she was. That hat she wore. Awful gumption for a funeral, too."

Slowly and ponderously Maria went downstairs. Hearing her coming, the women talked mournfully of the funeral and looked at her with compassion. Maria gazed at them, her teeth bared.

" Out of my house, backbiters and villains," she cried. " Shift your stinking bodies out. Sick you make me feel."

The women shrank away from her snarling face. But one of them called back from the door :

" Ach, you conceited bitch, take that old powder off your sluttish face."

Maria went into the kitchen and said to Aunt Ann : " Have they fed yet ? "

" Just cutting the ham John Jones is."

" Hurry them then and clear the house. Weary I feel."

And she was in such a fury that the glances and respect of the people in the parlour gave her no pleasure at all.

* * *

Then a week later John Jones brought his bill. Maria took him into the parlour and laid nineteen pound notes on the table.

The undertaker counted the money carefully, then turned to her a red face.

" Another ten shillings, Miss Morgans, please," he said, his voice bridling.

" Go on, discount you must give on a big lump sum like that," she answered. " Shabby was the funeral, too."

" Put you in court I will," he cried, shaking his fist excitedly. " Summons you I will, you old female Jew."

Maria was dressed in black velvet, and she wore her beads, ear-rings, and a watch, which was pinned on her smart tight frock. She got up from her chair and said in a superior English manner :

" I am not one to quarrel with undertakers over ten shillings. A gentleman I thought you, but now I am disappointed."

John Jones calmed himself ; it was as though he remembered something suddenly. He looked at her mournfully with his bright monkey eyes. But Maria went icily out of the room and returned with a canvas bag from which she took a large roll of notes. John Jones looked at the money, and his voice was wet as though with tears as he said :

" Forgive me, dear Miss Morgans, for losing my temper. Forgetting your sad loss I was for a moment. Dear me, how lonely you must feel. No companion for a young woman is your aunt. Made any plans, have you, for the future ? "

His fiery little heart really beat with warmth and pity for the bereaved Maria. And she smiled a little as she unrolled the notes beneath his affectionate eyes.

" No hurry am I in," she replied. " Comfortable I'll be with my money."

" Yes, indeed," he said, " and a good price would you get for this house and the other four in Mines Road. Freehold are they ? "

" Thinking of offering me a price for them, are you, then ? " she asked, smiling subtly. " And how did you know four houses I have in Mines Road ? "

" Told I was," he answered, looking at the floor.

" Nosey ! " she laughed. And, taking the canvas bag with her, she went out again, and came back presently with a bottle of port and a dish of biscuits.

" The first in this house," she cried triumphantly, holding up the bottle.

" Strict T.T. was your father," he said, laughing.

While they drank, Maria gazed dreamily out of the window. But she was aware of the undertaker's nervous glances. He sniffed and coughed uneasily. She said :

" No, no plans have I made yet. Move away I'd like to, but there's lonely a single woman would feel in a strange place. Now, if I could find a man to marry me. . . ." She turned languorous eyes to him. He looked into them.

It was more than he expected. Drinking his port hastily, he lay down the glass with a shaking hand and was suddenly on his knees before her. Grasping her hands, he spluttered passionately :

" Take me, dear, dear Miss Morgans. A lonely bachelor I am, too. And loved you I have since I saw you looking so cold and alone in the funeral. Yes, indeed now. Love. There's beautiful I feel for you."

She began to laugh and continued to do so.

" Well, well, this is a surprise. Too mean to love I thought you were, John Jones. Love me for myself you do ? "

" Bitter and unkind you are," he said sorrowfully.

" Ho," she said with a sudden vehemence, " no love have I got for any man. Marry you I will so that respected I'll be. And there's a surprise it will be for those women."

PLAGE PASSIM.

"NO, young Locker won't be coming. As a matter of fact, he went this morning. I know, rather sudden. I think I ought to tell you about it. I've got rather a grievance. If it hadn't been for him, I wouldn't have tapped you for those five hundred francs. I don't borrow off friends if I can help it, but I'm really in a bit of a hole till Molly comes. Well, Locker came to me a few days ago. He was getting a bit short of money. Said his cash from home was held up for a fortnight or so. Said he was bored as well. Of course, he's not the sort for this kind of place. Truth is, I suppose, he's too decent in a way. What's his gambling? Loses forty francs at boule every evening—as if anyone could win at it—and gets no fun. Doesn't join the tennis club because he thinks it's snobbish. Doesn't know anybody but us. Potters about sketching. As if they want an artist here, unless they get a fellow down to do drawings for the papers, and pay him to put 'em in. Or a photographer. Locker's kind of stunt's a walking tour—Provence or somewhere. Matter of fact, he was going on one, but the other chap fell through, and Locker hates being alone. Still, I don't blame him for that. Maladie du siècle, eh? But this sort of place is no good unless you've got money, or unless you're prepared to play the game. That's what I explained, and at first he was awfully shocked and got public-schooly, and used some nasty names. But I didn't mind that, because I rather liked him. So I called him sentimental—sentimental people hate that—and persuaded him to be a sport. Matter of fact, I took a deal of trouble with the lad; absolutely explained my system to him. Won him over, too—in a sort of way, for the time being. After all, we've got to live, I pointed out. And isn't living well an art in itself? And when we're showing other people how to live well, aren't we doing a benefit? And aren't we helping the lonely? And what's sex nowadays, anyway? Mark you, this was all a bit above his head,

but he took it well enough. I really opened that boy's eyes for him. Live and learn, I pointed out; and live and let live, as far as that goes. I used real eloquence, and I'm not surprised he took it in. Why, I even began to see myself as a sort of charity institute. Then we got down to his special case. After all, why shouldn't he get taken out a bit. A good meal—lunch, dinner, supper—goes a long way when one's run a bit short. And he could dance if he wasn't too lazy. And where was the harm in touching sometimes for a hundred francs or so? I had to be very delicate on that point. Still—and this got him—he could ask back and pay back when his money came, if he wanted to. Then I came out with Lady Felden and Mrs. Byrne. Unfortunately he knew about Lady F., and I must say she's rather a goer—so there was nothing doing there. But Mrs. Byrne's quite all right. American; husband a bad lot—dropped him years ago; youngish; hardly an accent; no vamp; all dollars and platinum. Drifts round, Paris, here, Venice, Biarritz, Monte Carlo, Paris again. Round and round the mulberry tree. But lonely, lonely as hell. Knows an odd Sadie or two, here and there; but really, if anyone does, needs a fellow to take her out, or take him out. Not a bit fierce, like most of 'em. Just made for Locker. Well, I fixed it all right. Introduced him, and she asked us both to dine at Carlo's. Absolutely easy running. Then what do you think happened? Love at first sight, my dear chap, absolute, frantic love! Never had such a shock in my life. Perfectly respectable, too. And there was I, my God, playing a sort of chaperon to turtle-doves. And this went on for three flaming days. It was all right for me, of course, though I must say, rather a change. Still, I didn't much want to take anything on till Molly came. Then, seven o'clock this morning, a knock at my door and Locker. The man was a wreck—all haggard and sleepless night and babbling. All Betty Byrne and smirching a pure soul, and how wonderful she was and how awful he'd been. How he'd be a cad if he married her, and I don't know what if he didn't. I was half-asleep, of course. Told him not to be a fool, and he nearly went for me. I must say he was very unpleasant as far as I was concerned. That's all the thanks one gets. Said he'd written a letter to say he was unworthy and a swine and good-bye for ever. Then, if you please, my God, borrows three hundred francs and off to Paris, or London, or Timbuctoo or goodness knows. And that's the

end of young Locker. Of course, I wondered how Betty would take it. A thing like that takes 'em all sorts of ways, from drowning themselves to drowning it. And I believe Betty's a drowner. Drowning sorrow, I mean—good old active tense. I really believe the affair had taught her something. Of course, I shall look after her till Molly comes. Then she'll have to move on, of course. After all, she'll understand ; she's a decent sort. I'm dining with her to-night. Then we'll go and look at the moon or dance. But as for young Locker, if you want to know my opinion, I consider him a ponce, and a bilker, too."

THAT DAY.

THAT day
Was like a ruby crusted with brown mud ;
A jewel hooped about with battered gold,
Wrenched from a crown, and thrown
Amid a mob loud-chaffering by a stall.
It was to them like any other day,
No eye had care for it, but we who saw
Ourselves torn free at last from strife and change,
Focussed at last on the red gleam of flame
That was its heart, and burned for us again
That day.

The rhododendrons blazed beneath the rain ;
Crimson they flashed without, against black hills
That day.
As in the faded shadows of a room
We sat, and drank our wine.
You said,
" We should be glad for song, even in this hell,"
And truly I was glad
As an old tree, long shedding its last leaves,
Rejoices, thinking of the sap it had.

The city kept our hearts in tune
That day ;
Behind the green partitions broidered over
With an old faded pattern of pink-centred flowers
There seemed to us to hover
A distant singing that went on for hours ;
Voices were rising and falling
In the chanting of a mass.
Days struggling under dark regret may through the future pass,
But still I know for once there came a word
Not breathed by human lips, but in the heart's core heard.

Without, as at a show,
The crimson rhododendrons stood rocking in a row
Like princesses with quilted skirts of green
Purfled with crimson silk; the dark and lean
Dry wind of April scraped its shrill gavotte
Against their boughs, that day.
The while about that spot
Rain-haunted ranges mingled black and grey;
Far off on forthills red-brown rooftops glowed,
Lisping unquiet poplars lined the road
Upon which each again turned to his separate way,
After we met, that day.

That day
My life was tautened like the dark round bow
Of the black-purple hills when the dawn-archer comes
And loosens his arrow-flight of light against the stars.
All of my being, evil and good, prepared
To spend itself in one mad sacrifice,
That the new vision we both shunned and shared
Might safely rise.

But, afterwards,
The ruby of the crown was tossed aside,
The singing in the distance quite died down,
The rhododendrons shattered under rain,
The flame that lit the distant hillside town
Faded to brown.
When all that could be done was done,
When all that could be said was said,
Our dreams were broken and shed
That day.

Richard Wyndham.

SEVEN.

. . . . . Under the apple tree
Half in the sun his frail bare legs lay curled
Loving the June heat. On the dry brown lea
His drawing book lay open. Through his brain
Moved in slow arabesque his spangled fancies
Of bluff and bearded brigands ; rolling frigates
Harassing noble corsairs and never furling
The roaring studsails ; endless vast romances
Of aquiline Sioux braves and puritan bigots
In mortal combat on rough log rafts swirling
Through boiling rapids down the Huron river
Where Patagonian pirates with bow and quiver
Sleuth the great snark and crack the eggs of the dodo
To enrich the biltong in canyons of Colorado
Over the fires round bison-hided wigwams. . . .
His tiny fingers smeared their neat smooth skin
As with crude art he turned his dreams to truth
And made the great trek wind across the paper
And with a stroke of the pen called up the djin
To scatter gold doubloons where the routing tapir
Grovelled for yams in mangrove swamps. . . .
Ah, Youth !

"THE PARTY."

SHE arrived rather late. Already the room seemed full and everyone was roaring with laughter.

"That's all right," she thought. "Too drunk to notice one's clothes."

There was certainly a din. Young Otway obstinately banged the piano, while everything resounded; he banged and banged, but no one listened.

At the sight of Myra, her white, rather puffy face, her broad, naïve smile and black eyebrows, several faces beamed with pleasure. One or two people seized her hands. She was renowned for her success at telling stories and with young men.

For a moment she gave herself up to her thoughts. She thought that everyone in the room knew she was with child, they knew it perfectly. And they all despised her! It had always been the same. She excited in them a special interest, she was immoral, disreputable, the daughter of a char living in the Mile End Road. It filled her with humiliation and wounded pride, and above all, with a spirit of defiance. She longed to shout and sing and to say something rude.

A piece of broken glass crunched under her feet and vibrated through her head.

"Adam catched Eve," shouted someone. "Do sing 'Adam catched Eve.'"

If she could have imagined that everything would be so hideous. That she should suffer like this for a little foolishness and nonsense. And not a penny. She would have to give up sitting as a model. . . . She wouldn't think about it—she wouldn't.

"Hullo, Myra."

"Hullo."

She stared coldly at a young man in a swallow-tail coat and white tie.

He held his legs wide apart, puffed some smoke out of his mouth and grinned at her.

" This is a dud show," he whispered.

" What's everyone doing in blasted boiled shirts ? "

" Never mind, my dear, you wait a bit. We'll get things going before long. I've got a lovely new song for you, a beauty."

" Don't feel like singing."

Her eyes wandered round the room. A crowd of authors, artists and dilettanti. The wine and whisky had made them all good-tempered and amusing. There was an atmosphere of mockery and of perverse and subtle voluptuousness.

The host was working hard trying to be particularly bright and ironic. He was celebrating his divorce and airing his views on family life. Some people thought he was rather handsome, and it was said that he had a round of adorers, all of whom had their special day.

" What will you have ? " he asked Myra.

" Whisky," she said.

Again her eyes roved round the crowd. One or two bright flashes of colour stood out clearly for a moment, then she lost them again. Suddenly the piano stopped, and laughs, words, movements, became more distinct.

She had two more whiskies and began to enjoy herself. One or two half-drunk young men tried to lure her into the next room. She just stared. Suddenly it was too comic. She burst out laughing.

" Another drink ? " someone suggested.

" Can't you see I'm a little drunk ? "

And suddenly she felt overwhelmed, worried and tired.

" Yes, get me a drink."

That was a little better, though she was conscious of a slight awkwardness in her legs. Her face was getting red and she felt she was standing in a sea of mud.

" Anything the matter, Myra ? "

Dollie Cole's voice. She hated her. She hated everyone.

" Matter ! " she said. " I should bloody well think so. I'm drowning the embryo in whisky."

Her laughter went on and on, she seemed to be laughing interminably.

And all the time her anger kept rising. She was an outcast. She didn't belong to these people. She wished she'd stayed always in the Mile End Road. Yes, she was inferior socially. But she mustn't show them that.

" Come and see the pictures in the next room ? "

" Oh, go to Hell ! "

Another drink and things got a little more vague. One or two couples were circling round and round the room. They came under the red light for a moment and disappeared. Insipidly they went round and round. Who were all these queer-looking people ? What did it matter ? As if she cared for trash like them.

Someone gave her a cigarette. Through a haze of smoke she stared at the interior of the room ; the orange and green silk cushions, the bilious yellow curtains, and yellow stuff that covered everything ; the repulsive modern pictures. How idiotic they were ! But of course she was only a gutter snipe, she didn't understand.

God ! how sick she felt !

She struggled. It was no good, she was going to be sick.

" Come on, Myra. Come and lie down in the next room."

She was led stumbling away by a woman who looked like a Hogarth model. Myra sank down on the divan hiding her face in the bilious cushions.

She was ashamed !

" I'm not drunk," she said. " I'm ill. I've only had one or two drinks. I'm . . . Oh . . . ! "

" Yes, yes, sit up a minute. . . . There now, you'll be all right."

Everything was going round and round.

She was violently sick. Her head sank back in the cushions. She shut her eyes and pretended to be asleep.

Now and then she became aware of odd people coming in and out of the room. But there was no meaning in life. It simply went on and on—round and round like her head. At times she had imagined she was going on towards something. But what ? It was all a darkness. If she died it wouldn't make any difference. On and on . . . round and round like a cat chasing its own tail. . . . Perhaps she ought to be sorry. But was there anything really to be sorry about ?

A woman's hand was stroking her forehead. " Feeling better ? " she murmured.

Fussing her ! Why couldn't the woman leave her alone ? Somewhere there was a beautiful moon-lit night.

Now fragments of conversation. A man's voice.

" Come on, Eve. Let's clear out. Come on to my place as you promised."

" Sh—sh ! She's going to sleep. I must look after her. Yes, yes, presently."

" Don't waste time—you know it's precious. I . . . "

" Yes, yes."

" Well, come on."

" Poor Myra ! I believe she's pregnant."

" Here's your cloak. God ! How beautiful you are ! "

A sound of kissing. Then silence.

For a moment Myra was alone. She felt empty, lifeless.

The door opened quietly and more people came into the room. Coming and going, coming and going. And in all the clamour she had no part. Empty, lifeless, nothingness !

She exerted all her force to remain still, asleep. Two men's voices.

" An absurd thing happened to-day. I went to the B.M. to prepare my lecture and left all my notes at home."

" Freudian, eh ! You don't want to give the lecture."

" As a matter of fact I don't."

" Hullo, there's Myra asleep."

" She's drunk ! "

" No, I'm not drunk."

And Myra began to cry and twitch her shoulders. The two men felt sorry and looked helplessly at each other. The poor creature was worrying over some triviality or other. Anyway, she was drunk !

But she went on crying and twitching. And all the time she kept thinking that she had never known real love, and that life was hard and insufferable.

Once more she was alone.

Who was this ?

Beautiful Sylvia Roberts was standing in the doorway. She put up her hands to tidy her hair.

" Anyone here ? " asked a voice behind her.

Myra recognised the voice. A young, very young art student.

" Only Myra," said Sylvia. " Tight as usual. She was awful the other night, too."

The youth entered the room, blinked and stammered awkwardly.

" I love you. I—I love you, Sylvia ! "

Sylvia laughed.

" But I—I do love you," he repeated, and clutched her nervously by the arm.

She waited a moment to see what the funny little boy would do next. She was thirty-eight and really these—these schoolboys !

" You are so wonderful ! "

" How clumsy you are ! " she muttered in an undertone.

" Yes. I'm—I'm clumsy because I love you. That—that will get better presently. Please—please let me."

She looked at him with ironic amusement.

Someone was playing a banjo in the next room. And someone was singing an old bawdy song that had been raked up in the British Museum.

For a moment a look of incredible bliss came on the boy's face. Then he met Sylvia's eyes distorted with repulsion and he loathed himself.

" Yes. I'm—I'm ugly and clumsy," he muttered. " But then everything is ugly, everything. . . . "

Myra pretended to be asleep. The voice went on singing. . . . After the child was born she would give up all this sort of thing. She would get a job in a shop, there must be lots of jobs going. She would work really hard.

The time was passing. Sylvia had gone, but the boy was still there.

She opened her eyes and looked at him.

He was miserable. He had tried to be bold and had only been clumsy. And the smell of her hair, the smallness of her waist, her satirical laughter, all rose with amazing vividness before his imagination. She had made him feel ashamed—it was shame that had made him clumsy. He hated her.

" Don't worry ! " said Myra suddenly. " She's a silly little ass anyway."

" If only you knew how miserable I am."

Myra forced herself to smile.

" So am I. And God knows what I'm going to do. I must give up sitting you see."

" Why ? "

" I'm going to have a child."

" You're—you're . . . "

" Yes, I am, and that's that ! "

" But . . . "

" The father is more broke than I am and hasn't sold a picture for months."

" You—you love him ? "

" I'm damned if I do."

" But you did."

" I suppose I did . . . Anyway he's gone away—Italy I think, but no one knows his address."

" And he doesn't know about . . . ? "

" No."

The boy was thinking hard, longing to say something sympathetic and friendly. But really he was at a loss. What could he do ? And still a feeling of shame and anger was rankling in his breast. And now he pictured Myra homeless, unable to pay her rent, homeless and helpless, deserted by everyone.

He muttered out loud trying to clear his thoughts.

" My room . . . I could sleep on the floor. Surely she wouldn't mind my sleeping on the floor . . . If I give up smoking and drinking we might just scrape along. . . . I don't want to write home for any more money. I . . . Oh, Lord, what's that ? "

Myra was now lying on her back snoring loudly.

The boy watched her for a moment, then stole quietly out of the room and out into the night. He gazed upwards at the sky, at the stars all lit up. A quiet incomprehensible night, beautiful and indifferent. He felt that he had lived for thousands of years and that he could never die.

The thought oppressed his soul, and all the stars and the incomprehensible sky merged into a feeling of loneliness . . . of despair . . . !

VROUW BERTHA AND THE BABOONS.

"COME in, you must be tired."

"Thank you," I said.

She ushered me into a dirty but gratefully cool room.

"You would like a drink?"

"Thank you very much."

I sat down in a long cane chair and drank with joy a small cup of dop and water.

"You speak English very well," I said, "how's that?"

"I come from the Cape. I met my husband there, and came up country with him," she said, spreading a pair of podgy hands.

"I see."

"How did you get lost?"

"Oh, I went out after buck, and found lion tracks which I followed, that's all. My own fault. Expect the sun caught me. I remember feeling silly and quite vague—you know—not knowing anything."

"Oh," she said, "my English is good, don't bother to explain. But are you feeling all right now?"

"Yes, thank you, Mevrouw. Perhaps you will tell me to whom I am indebted?" I replied.

"Bertha Wietensberg—and yours?"

"Peter Strange, Mevrouw."

The informal introduction over, we sat and regarded one another.

She was fat, dumpy and dirty, but there was a merry twinkle in her eye and I liked her.

"There are great numbers of babajohns—I mean baboons (here she waved her hands at me) round the farm, Mevrouw. The kopjes were black with them. One fellow I noticed particularly—a great big brute!"

"Ah!"

Mevrouw Bertha stiffened, and looked round the room almost fearfully, I thought.

" Do they steal your mealies ? "

" Yes, they do. Listen ! There is something horrible about them. They know things. They hate me because they know I know things. That big one, he is human. He has a human spirit. Murderer ! "

" But," I said, " how do you know all this ? "

" Ah ! I'm not stolid like other Dutch women, I have imagination. I know ! Besides, I have black blood in me and there are things that were born with me. I'm not ashamed—why should I be ? It's not my fault. But I tell you, he is a murderer that big one. One day he will murder me too."

" Why ! " I said, " you don't mean to tell me that he has killed one of your boys ? "

" Not one of my boys, but Pieter, my husband. Yes," she went on before I had time to express my regret, " yes, the big one got him, because he threw stones at it. He wouldn't shoot it, because he said God meant it to eat his mealies ; but he threw stones at it, all the same."

She was short of breath.

" A little more dop, Mr. Strange ? "

" No thank you, Mevrouw."

But she clapped her hands and when a boy appeared, said " Dop, quickly."

When the dop appeared she diluted it with a little water, then gulped it down and folding her hands over her stomach she went on : " I used to plead with Pieter, but it was no good. I said, ' If you don't shoot him, you must not throw stones at him, for God will be angry. That—that babajohn hates you, he hates me. Kill him ! Shoot him ! Then put his body among the mealies,' but Pieter wouldn't do it."

She made as if to drink, but saw that her cup was empty.

" Why, if he'd done it that lot out there would have had no leader. There is not one among them like him ! "

" But don't you think," I suggested, " that they would take reprisals ? "

" Reprisals, reprisals ? " she questioned.

" I mean revenge. Don't you think that they would take all your mealies and strip your fields ? "

" Never ! " she said angrily. " I know ! it's in my bones. That big one, the human one, he's the trouble. He got Pieter in the mealies, because Pieter threw a stone at him. He came

down from his kopje screaming and crushed him, and then tore him with his teeth. Ah, poor, poor Pieter ! "

With tears trickling down her face she got unsteadily to her feet, and went over to the one window. Raising the sun-blind she called to me, and pointed out the big one I had noticed.

" That's him, the devil, that's him," she said in a sudden rage.

Then she moaned and flung her arms round my neck. " Oh, I'm afraid, afraid. Stay with me, Sir. Do not leave me ! Stay for one night with me ! I will smooth your hair, and brush your cheeks if you will stay. I will—I will kiss . . . "

Suddenly, she stiffened.

I heard the drumming of hoofs, and through a rent in the sun blind saw a cloud of dust.

Vrouw Bertha broke away. I noticed that her face was pouring with sweat. We resumed our seats.

Presently the door opened, and a tall bearded Dutchman came in.

" Good evening," he said, then speaking in Taal, which I could not understand, he turned to Vrouw Bertha.

" This is my husband, Pieter Wietensberg," she said.

Concealing my astonishment as well as I could I shook hands.

* * *

Vrouw Bertha came out as I was saddling up.

" Look ! " she said.

She pointed to the chattering army of baboons.

" Always watching. And that big one there in the same place ! "

" But," I said, " you told me that it had killed your husband."

" Well, yes. I mean—oh, it will ! I know. I feel it in my bones. I have black blood in me, the knowledge was born with me ! "

" Well, mevrouw, I must say goodbye. Thank you very much for your hospitality."

I mounted my mare.

" Goodbye, Mr. Strange."

I spurred forward.

As I left the homestead I saw that the big baboon was nothing but a stunted, derelict tree !

"ROUGE ET NOIR."

WISER than most women, Marthe Richoux rejoiced in her husband's poverty. Wise, too, she was, in never allowing her feelings to betray her. In her obstinate fashion she devoted herself to her gambling-mad husband. She shuddered at the thought of losing him. The prospect of ending her days alone terrified her. Her youth and what faint traces of beauty had been hers had long since gone. Only Gustave was left to her.

At first she had protested violently at the wanton dissipation of his income at the tables. That was years ago. By degrees her anger had given place to sullen acquiescence, a philosophic shrug of the shoulders, a murmured "*A la guerre comme à la guerre.*" She began to realise that Gustave's bad luck was her good fortune.

Marthe was no fool. She had all the *bourgeoise's* reverence for money. Her own tiny income was a sacred thing. All Gustave's frenzied pleadings for a loan she had met with cold refusal. He had long ago realised the futility of asking Marthe any favours. She was mean, the old furnace! And he waited, desperately impatient, for the next quarterly payment of his own money.

With a wry smile somewhere inside her Marthe would watch his spirits revive as the day grew near. Then he would draw his money from the picturesque little bank near the Casino itself, carry it home in a bag, and solemnly divide it into ten equal amounts. He was queer, like all gamblers. Superstition rode him hard. New hiding-places he would hunt for, to bring him luck.

Marthe's laughter, softened by the years, never checked him. An odd appearance he presented, too; untidy, watery-eyed, like a pallid elderly monkey, with a rapid, nervous cough and a way of looking at you as though he was thinking of something else, as he probably was. Gambling, most virulent of all the

fevers, dominated him. He never acknowledged it, deluding himself—but not his wife—that his systems, gradually perfected, could not fail in the end to yield the riches his heart desired.

He grumbled unceasingly at his poverty. " If only one had the capital," he would groan, " one could become fabulously wealthy." He regarded his experiments as business propositions which languished for want of the necessary financial backing, forgetful of his sudden impulses, his superstitious inspirations.

For eight years Gustave and Marthe had lived thus on the fringe of this " jewel of the coast," as the hotel announcements described the town. Both were completely indifferent to its natural splendour, its blue skies and not less vivid seas, its radiant flowers and fashionable reputation. Gustave was indifferent to all but the lure of the tables. When the salons were closed he ceased to exist, went home, muttered " Rouge et noir " to Marthe's habitual enquiry as to where he had been —as though she did not know !—undressed and went to bed.

Marthe was content that he should lose. She lived in fear of the day the luck might turn. She could picture his return, his crazy elation, his madness. In his sullen moods, he had savagely reminded her of the golden, beckoning future awaiting him. Him, not her. Once he had taunted her with her faded looks, had said something which had sent a chilly stab to her heart. " A pretty woman ! What would I not give for a pretty woman ! "

Outwardly calm, but with her life's fear at an instant's release, she waited every day for his return from the salons. If he returned early, she breathed a sigh of relief. All was well, he had lost what he had. If she heard the hour strike when the salons closed, she waited in dread, which the passage of the years had scarcely dulled, for the sound of his footsteps on the gravel path of their ramshackle villa.

" Where have you been ? " Her foolish formula was never omitted. Her husband, pale and breathing heavily, would look at her and say, " Rouge et noir." It was a sort of convention between them. He rarely spoke another word, unless by chance he had won a few hundred francs, but sipped in silence the nightly *café-cognac* Marthe never failed to prepare. As for Marthe, she ignored his muttered calculations as completely as she refrained from upbraiding him for the silence which betokened his failures.

Rouge et noir! The phrase seemed to have rung as an ironic motif through her life. It had always been rouge et noir. It always would be rouge et noir. So long as the luck—the bad luck—held.

One night the wheel turned full circle. People pointed at the funny little bearded habitué, some amused, many envious. The luck had turned with a vengeance. Crowds followed his choice on the green baize, sooner or later to desert his incredible run of good fortune in the foolish belief that he could not possibly continue to win. Gustave savoured the miraculous thrill of the gambler. He gathered his winnings mechanically, betting to the limit with all the icy intentness of the professional. He spoke not a word. His watery eyes became hard and dilated. His hand trembled, but imperceptibly.

The luck held. When the bell rang, Gustave Richoux was a rich man. He had, after all these years, brought off his coup. He put on his scarf and coat, descended the marble steps and stood for a second breathing in the cold night air.

It was hard to realise.

"*Monsieur a bien gagné ce soir*," said a soft voice at his elbow.

He turned. A painted face smiled invitingly at him. The gentle pressure of a hand on his arm, the gossamer contact of a fur blown by the cool breeze on his cheek, the fragrance of perfume . . . The gates were open.

Not once did he think of Marthe that night. As a starving man will greedily assuage his hunger and thirst, he quenched his unfettered longing. His back was turned on the old miserable scraping and waiting; the glorious future opened out radiantly before his eyes. This was the life he wanted. A soft young woman, rich food and drink, comfort, luxury, freedom. In his trembling passion he drank, unthinkingly. The girl wondered cynically if he would make a beast of himself when drunk. *Tant pis!* She knew how to deal with men—no matter who they were, what their condition.

He made plans. He unfolded the panorama of the golden future, in which this girl was to share. In the darkness the girl smiled. It was going to be easier than she thought. The

money might last six months, and the season was nearly over.

" *Quelle vie !* " she sighed, reminiscently.

" *Quelle vie !* " echoed Gustave, his thoughts leaping forward.

He awoke after sleeping two hours. In the grey light he thought suddenly of Marthe. Resentfully, and rather afraid. Yet why should he be ? He was free now to do what he liked. His companion was sleeping, the sound sleep of those who earn their living.

He would go to the villa while she slept, collect one or two things, and finish once and for all with that mean old harridan. Then he would return. He glanced at the sleeping girl. Her shoulder gleamed bare in the wakening light. Her face was buried pillow-deep. Her breast rose and fell steadily. Yes, she was young—and desirable.

Gustave crept from the bed, gathered his clothes, dressed quietly and rapidly outside the room. He would not waste time by tidying himself. He made his way silently into the street as dawn was breaking.

Marthe was waiting. A queer dignity robbed her haggard figure of piteousness. She knew. Mechanically her lips framed the words " Where have you been ? "

He stared at her malevolently, but did not answer. He silently cursed his impulse to return to the villa. He felt the sensation of a man who is robbed. In that pause he knew his fate. He could not escape. Tonelessly, he said :

" Rouge et noir ! "

Marthe's mouth twisted in a kind of smile. She pointed at him.

" Yes. Rouge et noir ! Look in the glass." She turned away. " Thy *café-cognac is ready*."

He stared into the mirror. His lips unnaturally red, his cheeks and eyelids smeared with eye-black.

Rouge et noir !

LOVE'S LONELINESS.

EVER his eyes were fast where the sea touched the sky
For someone from afar coming to comfort him ;
His glance a faded fire and a vast emptiness ;
As a Prometheus bound in sleepless suffering.
Scarce did he even sigh watching the horizon
'Neath his unfastened locks, tumbling chaotically ;
One hand was clenched and still open the otherlay,
" Passions are fleet as light on a waterfall."
Thus would he sit and sigh wrinkling the burning sand.
Faint down the breeze came, as though from far away
Sounds of boys' voices with wail of a distant flute
Homeward returning from blithe labours in the fields,
One with his snowy teeth bared and his sprightful mouth
Wrinkled and curling, whilst sparkling eyes puckered up.

Glad in their youth were they, glad in the evening air
Free as the careless wind fitful and fluttering,
Stirring the grasses up and their thick boyish locks.
" See how he sits, by Earth, comrades, just look at him !
" He has been crossed in love, or he has tried to kiss
Where softer lips than his have kinder welcoming."
" Hearts are as empty as dreams in the morning light."
All gazed at him aghast, as though an image spoke :
Fleeing away they sped into the olive groves,
Fleeing from grey eyes fast where the sea touched the sky.

Circe's Island, Italy.

CONCERNING HAMLET.

SO *Hamlet* has been played in the costume of to-day and all the London world has, I hear, wondered, and what is more, applauded. To me the wonder is that this simple idea had not previously occurred to a modern producer. (But the entertainment business is, as I, working with the newest medium, the cinematograph, have only too much reason to be aware, the most conservative in the world.) *Hamlet* is what is known as a " classic." That is to say it is immortal, which, in turn, implies that it is not so many ounces of print and paper to lie snug, dusty and forgotten on the shelf, but, like all good art, a piece of radium constantly giving off energy, constantly a factor, however anonymous and obscure, in the life of to-day. There have been eminent idiots—there still are—who fatuously contrast the life of the " man of action " with that of the " man of thought," and of the " wide awake, practical man " with that of the " dreamy, unpractical artist." No proceeding can be more short-sighted and consequently more absurd, for the wisest minds are those with the longest, not the sharpest sight. An action—some typical eminent imbecility by some professor of violence, some turkey-drumstick Napoleon or other Public Nuisance—is performed and that action " changes the course of history." Mark, however, that (save in so far as the memory of that act explicitly serves as an instigator of other actions) when once that action is performed, the inner force is expended and the course of history has been changed once and for all. There is no " once and for all " about a work of art. It discharges its force continually and the collective resultant actions for which a Beethoven is responsible will in a few centuries probably rival in significance and number, as they will undoubtedly exceed in quality, the total resultants of the brief and sensational commotion caused by a Napoleon. " No angel visits the pool, but the waters must be troubled." Napoleon, the vulgar little boy in the paper cocked hat, hopes to create

WILLIAM ROBERTS.

a sensation by stirring the pool with his gamin's foot. That effervescence soon subsides, while the light and tempest created by the passing of a St. Michael's wing trouble and inspire the ages. Homer means more to us than Alexander and, as the cannon smoke rolls from the first decades of the last century and this, we behold not Napoleon, but Shelley as a world power. A true work of art, while it need not be up-to-date, is always contemporary. *Lear*, a full fledged Aeschylean tragedy, has power to stir us, though what I may call the " theology " thereof (sheer revolt against a personal and wanton Superior Power— " As flies to *wanton* boys are we to the gods, they kill us for their sport ") only appeals to us in our more primitive moments, since post-Galilean astronomy invites us to resignation and post-Einstein physics to mysticism. The case of *Hamlet* is different. It is not only contemporary in the sense that all great works of art, even the most primitive (and I use " primitive " in no derogatory sense), are contemporary ; it is also " up-to-date," " modern."

We are accustomed, owing to the swamping of our stage by Victorian " stage properties " and the relics of eighteenth-century declamation, to think of such a play as *Othello* as a remote thing. I do not imagine that the players in Southwark played it that way, or the audience so felt it, I envisage the whole affair very differently. Imagine a performance of *Othello* as corresponding somewhat for Elizabethan actor and audience to the performance of a play constructed about a well-known Latin " cause célèbre " (say the Caillaux affair) by Pinero. I picture nearly all Shakespeare's plays as being staged with no more effort after antiquarian accuracy than is to be seen in Paul Veronese's *Marriage of Cana*. (*Antony and Cleopatra* should certainly be staged in the manner of Paul Veronese's *Clemency of Alexander*.) Antiquarianism has never yet saved a play. If the characters in the play live, it matters very little how they dress. I am altogether opposed to the cult of the *decor*. That is for the cinematograph, which has no voice. On the stage it is the human voice and presence (so different from the shadow presence of the screen) that counts. These are what renders the medium unique (and until we get back to thinking in terms of what is peculiar to each medium, none of our arts will prosper). I see *Hamlet*, then, as for the Elizabethan audience somewhat like a play about Prince Yussopoff and

Rasputin might be for us, if we knew no more about Kerensky and Co. than we might have read in back-numbers of the *Daily Mail*. There are, therefore, two ways of presenting the play: the pseudo Elizabethan and the Modern. The pseudo Elizabethan would not be an antiquarian reconstruction of an early Seventeenth Century stage success played in Southwark and entitled *Hamlet*. It would be an imaginative effort to render the play in generalized Elizabethan terms, having the same relation to antiquarian actuality that a festival canvas of Veronese has to the Venice of his time. And since Shakespeare insists in this play on the local colour (the tourist's pride: I have known an eminent director in the "Movies" affected after a like manner), the scene would not have the splendour of a Veronese, but an air of the shadowy north and its moodiness as reflected in northern painters, especially imaginative painters, between and including Durer and Rembrandt. The Modern Method is the method of Sir Barry Jackson. This method is a method which serves to isolate for our observation the fact of the permanence of the flow of force typical of any great work of art, and peculiarly typical of this, the first truly "modern" play. There is nothing "Greek" and little "mediæval" about *Hamlet*. It belongs to *us* by reason, largely, of its disregard of "ultimate" factors in the shape of a jealous Fate or an atoning Christ and a triumphant Church. We are here very much concerned, not with humanity at large, but with individual humans, and in particular with a sort of Aldous Huxley young man named Hamlet in whose mind the image of action mocks the act itself. The idea of Hamlet as a "man of thought" type set up by Shakespeare in opposition to Laertes as a "man of action" type is a Philistinism that will not long bear examination. Hamlet can act—no doubt of that. But he has, like so many studious and imaginative young men of to-day, a fatal weakness for amateur theatricals, and these theatricals do not take place only in Elsinore Castle and at his instigation, but in his head and contrary to his will. They take place in his head for very much the same reasons that they take place in so many undergraduate heads to-day. (Hamlet is very much the undergraduate.) Shakespeare's *Hamlet* came into being in a post-romantic age (the first fervour of the Elizabethan age was over, disenchantment was setting in). More information and particularly knowledge of the past (vanitas vanitatum!) had been

lately unloosed than could be immediately digested. Scepticism was fashionable. In short—Elsinore was built of much the same bricks as *Heartbreak House*. It may be contended that I am identifying Shakespeare with Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. Well, if I wish, why not ?—many more eminent and wiser persons have done so. But I do not wholly so identify Shakespeare. I only identify one side of him—the hypochondriacal side : the side that gave us so many exquisitive and intriguing " flabbies." The robust side of Shakespeare culminates in Antony ; the side I speak of is Hamlet. (Only in the historical Falstaff does he achieve any fundamental amalgamation of the two sides.) We have several approximations ere we arrive at Prince Hamlet : Richard the Second and Romeo being the most patent. These youths are an uneasy crew, deducible perhaps from those difficulties that beset any artist for whom the typical act is an act of imagination. But what is demanded of Hamlet is no act of imagination. Moreover, he lacks the faculty to create an artist—result : amateur theatricals on every possible occasion when there occurs or can be snatched a moment for them. Commentators have alleged that the (to my mind) nowadays somewhat commonplace, but in Shakespeare's daringly speculative, speech " To be or not to be," provides us with a key to Hamlet's character. I find it rather in the " O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I." How typically modern this is ! The shadow of that formidable " beaver," that hirsuteness that transformed the melancholy Gumbrill into the Complete Man, falls across Sir Barry Jackson's stage. Or so it seems to me. But perhaps the other and illustrious commentators are right. It does not matter. Every great work of art is an incarnation in synthesis of a multitude of different emotional ideas, whereof every observer finds some particular silhouette, which most appeals to him, and which appears to him for that very reason most to inform the total design.

THE TERRORIST.

LOUIS QUIGLEY crouched over the balustrade of the upper circle, shivering in his thin overcoat.

Overhead there was a continual pattering of feet and occasional loud thuds, as the poor people crowded into the gallery, shuffling and talking noisily, jumping along the rude tiers of wooden seats. A respectful stream of shabby genteel people filtered through the upper circle, seeking their seats rapidly. Below, in the stalls, in the dress circle and in the boxes, sombrely-clad men entered slowly, with rigid lips and bored faces, inattentively glancing for their sumptuous seats. The bare, powdered bosoms of their women sparkled with jewels. They dropped their luxurious wraps and sank wearily into their seats.

Quigley, leaning against his curved left arm that lay along the red velvet covering of the upper circle balustrade, glanced downwards at the rich who entered, with intense hatred in his feverish eyes.

"Drones!" he muttered. "Drones soured by their own luxury!"

The theatre filled, noisily above him, respectfully about him, boredly below him. It was very warm in the theatre. You could smell the artificial heat coming in waves through the brilliantly lighted hall. But Quigley shivered in his thin overcoat.

He had been waiting for two hours at the door in order to get a front seat behind the balustrade. And it had been a cold winter's night outside; a clear, frosty, starlit sky overarching the windy streets, through which the ill-clad poor went crouching.

His overcoat was buttoned about his throat, enveloping his meagre frame loosely like a bag. A shabby grey cap covered his skull, down over his forehead and pressing his ears outwards. His ears were blue with the cold. His face was small, thin and

pale ; but there was a fever in his large, blue eyes that illuminated the paltry face and made it terrifying. The face was fixed and the vertical grooves in the skin gathered between the eyes did not twitch. His whole being was transfixed, contemplating the idea in his brain.

The idea had been with him for six days, since he first contemplated the act, in the darkness of his room at night, clutching his knees in bed, thinking. The desire to commit the act had entered his brain suddenly without his knowing it or expecting it. When it came, he had sprung out of bed in terror. He had stood for a long time in his bare feet on the floor, stooping forward, listening. Listening, he had become very tired. He had sighed. He had entered his bed again slowly, utterly exhausted. He had fallen asleep almost immediately. But in the morning he awoke to find the idea fixed in his brain ; as securely fixed there as if he had been born to commit the act. All the other ideas had gone. He had no further interest in them. He read no more. He spent the six days making preparations for the act.

Watching the people enter, he was quite cool. But the tips of the fingers of his left hand were embedded in the soft red velvet of the balustrade covering. And the knuckles of his left hand were white. He waited tensely until the appointed moment should come, without thinking. It seemed to him that his head was made of iron, it felt so strong. It also seemed to him that he was really sitting alone, an immeasurable distance from everybody, that he was enveloped by a cloud ; and that he would hurl a thunderbolt out of that cloud, down upon the drones. An avenging God !

Before he hurled the bomb, he would utter aloud his prophecy. It would go forth to all the world as a clarion call. The tocsin would be sounded that night. " The blare of trumpets at dawn on the banks of the Po, as the squadrons of Hasdrubal's Nubian horsemen . . ." Prophets immolate themselves. His right hand was thrust into his right breast pocket between the second and third buttons of his overcoat.

The theatre was full. Now a dull murmur rose as thousands of words mingled in the heated air without form or meaning. People murmuring. Broken waves seething white on a rocky shore, thought Quigley. The sound pleased him. He fancied that there below, beneath the cloud in which his body was

hidden, a concourse of people bubbled expectantly, waiting for his word and the sacrifice of blood. " Somewhere and by someone that sacrifice will be made ; even by one man armed with a stone." A bomb was more fitting than a stone, because the reverberation of its explosion would resound through the earth to awake the sleepers, to urge on the tired ones ; all, all marching with the prophecy on their lips. His body grew still colder and salty moisture exuded from the corner of his eyes. His eyes blurred and he could see nothing below him. People had sat on either side of him closely. That was all right. Behind him, around him and above him were his own people. Below him were the drones.

Crash ! He started violently, and then his body relaxed, trembling, as the soft sounds of music rose from the orchestra, the jingle jingle of the cymbals tintillating, tintillating, the weird melancholy comic sound of the saxophone, the alternating boom of the drums and the choleric brasses pounding the air ; all in harmony mingling. It was the mad laughter of the elements heralding his act.

He was carried away by the sound. His miserable frame collapsed with a loose palsied movement of his weak muscles ; rendered incapable by the feverish exaltation of his mind to remain fixed and taut. The crude anger of his idea now changed. It became enveloped with a maniacal joy that transcended it. Lo ! The whole theatre had transformed before his eyes. Lo ! There in that box to the left of the stage two women had entered, while two men, hidden from his view, seated them, and he could see the white hands of the men, with jewels shimmering on their fingers, gesticulating ; while the women disponed their dresses and sat upright laughing backward at their men. Two tipsy courtesans. One dark, with firm jaws and rounded, firm busts, smiled stupidly, while her black eyes ogled her man. The other, with hair the light golden colour of ripe corn, the fecund colour of the fruitful earth, drooped languidly, a beautiful fawn beast exulting in her savage beauty. His blurred eyes gloated over her long stately limbs, loosened with wine and sensuality. Lo ! This was not anger, but an exulting joy ; the slaughter of drones ; society had laid before him the most gross and yet exquisite manifestation of its lordly vice so that his act might go forth. . . .

Br-r-r-r. Suddenly the drums of his ears began to hum,

deafening him. His cheeks flushed a rosy colour. He half rose from his seat trembling violently. They made a startled movement about him, shrinking away and looking in awe at his frenzied eyes. Half risen, he smiled and tried to pull forth the bomb to hurl at the fawn beast, but . . .

In a moment the humming stopped in his ears. He became aware of the movement about him. This unbalanced him and he fell back into his seat. He wanted to look around him and say something to reassure HIS people. But he was incapable of any action but one, i.e., to hurl the bomb. Already nobody else existed in the world but himself, and " the horned spectres of the Revelations " down below. His stomach was becoming ill, and all his members were revolting in terror from any movement. And his brain began to be afraid ; afraid of the extraordinary and unexpected conduct of his stomach, which was now assuming the mastery over his brain, starting some devilry of its own, expanding and throbbing, as if at the next instant it would explode and annihilate him. Plump ! He sat down, closed his eyes and held his breath.

There was a murmur about him now, about him and behind him. He heard it, but he took no notice. His consciousness was impervious now to sound. Sound had become formless and meaningless to his ears. The music still continued. Down below people were swaying to its rhythm. But he no longer heard the rhythm. In the box a man had planted his left foot on the fawn beast's lap. With a languid gesture she cast it off and made a sensual movement downwards from her loins. No, not there. His eyes were also out of control. They wandered from the box along the dress circle, and there they suddenly became fixed once more.

There was a row of black clothed youths like mummies sitting erect, with stiff necks and thoughtless pallid faces gazing inanely at the stage. His ecstasy changed once more into anger. The fever left him and he became rigid. Here, here was the most foul iniquity. Not debauch nor luxury, but young humanity drained of its intelligence, an insult to the divinity of man ; " the headless clowns sitting on the throne of wealth to sign the edicts of ghoulish fiends that trample the starving millions."

Now he was completely in a state of unconsciousness. There was some excited movement about him, and people were talking

loudly and calling, but it meant nothing to him. Because the idea had repossessed him with terrific power. It had expanded in his brain until his whole entity had vanished, and he had become purely an amorphous idea crying : " Now, now."

He arose slowly like an automaton, with curious stilted movements. He raised his left hand. Abruptly he pulled forth the bomb. He raised his eyes to the ceiling. He cried out :

" Man has conquered the earth. He now marches triumphantly to the conquest of the Universe. The drones stand in the way. Death to . . ."

His voice ended in a choking murmur as several big men pounced on him. He felt numb immediately, and then . . . he floated away, lying, he thought, on a soft fleecy cloud, soaring over the void of the wrecked Universe.

A STUBBORN TREE.

DR. SNOWBALL possessed the scientific mind. He was well enough off to make use of it in the matter of experiments. He experimented in sounds. He lived at Hill House, and considered himself another Goethe.

Dr. Snowball married a pretty lady, and not very long after his wedding he made his first successful experiment by driving away some thieves from his house by means of sound. The sound that he made upon that occasion issued from two horns that he bought during his honeymoon in Switzerland. He blew the horns when he heard the thieves breaking in at the pantry window and they at once vanished. That was the effect of sound, but Dr. Snowball wished to know more.

This experiment with the horns moved the wise doctor to try further with less attentive listeners than thieves.

He travelled to London upon a foggy day in the first-class carriage of an express train. In front of the doctor sat a member of parliament, who wished to get away from his wife and hadn't to pay for his ticket.

As the train drew near to London a detonator upon the line went off. Dr. Snowball sprang up, opened the window and looked out. He saw nothing—only thick fog. A little further on another explosion happened, and then three, one after the other.

Dr. Snowball sprang up again, slapped the member of parliament upon his knee and said excitedly: "A heavy goods train was in front that felt the noise and got out of the way."

The member of parliament, who wasn't used to being slapped, except at elections, told Dr. Snowball to mind his own business.

"Keep your seat," he said sternly.

"But sound is my business," explained Dr. Snowball meekly, "for I am experimenting."

" Then keep your experiments to yourself," replied the member.

Mrs. Snowball, being the pretty lady that she was, very naturally attracted another pretty lady to stay in her house. This lady was her younger sister, Kitty, who would wear, when she went out, a red hat with a blue feather.

Dr. Snowball, having the true scientific mind, mistrusted all other minds of the same nature. He wished to have his experiments reported in the local paper by a trustworthy hand who didn't doubt the truth of them. Any other professor whom he might ask to assist him, would be sure to call him a liar, and so he wished for a witness who knew nothing of the trade.

At breakfast one morning he looked hard at Kitty, who wore nice clothes that fitted her perfectly. Kitty smiled and her eyes encouraged him. He pressed her foot under the table with his own to make sure that she wouldn't deceive him or call him an impostor. Dr. Snowball thought she would do. He decided to use her.

One day Dr. Snowball was walking along the village street and a motor horn hooted behind him. He stepped quickly to the side of the road : he knew the sound had moved him. He stood upon the bank and watched the motor go by. The motorist looked at him and smiled, and Doctor Snowball decided that the man was experimenting, too.

The following day Dr. Snowball visited a garage where motors were sold and asked for one with a very special horn.

" I wish for a horn that makes a sound like the leviathan," said Dr. Snowball.

" And what kind of sound may that be ? " asked the shopman.

Dr. Snowball replied that the sound was something between the bellow of a bull and the roar of a sea-lion.

As soon as the car was ready with the new horn fixed to it, that made indeed the most monstrous roar when the india-rubber ball was pinched, Dr. Snowball looked in the village for someone to experiment with. He chose Barnaby, an innocent who was believed to be deaf.

Dr. Snowball drove his car down the road in which Barnaby was standing and making faces at the girls who were behind a very large elm, the largest in the village. The girls were jeering at Barnaby, who began to throw stones.

Dr. Snowball sounded his hideous horn. The children ran away and the car ran into Barnaby. . . .

Dr. Snowball was so interested in this experiment that, although it hadn't been as successful as he could have wished, yet he took a great deal of pains to cure Barnaby of his hurt, because he wished to ask him a question.

Every day while Barnaby was ill, Miss Kitty would go to the boy's cottage with wine and cake. She would be invited into the front room where Barnaby's mother never grew tired of saying how kind the Doctor was and how much they owed to his skill.

When Barnaby was better and able to come downstairs, Dr. Snowball came to see him, together with Miss Kitty.

Dr. Snowball shouted very loudly in Barnaby's ear that he wished to ask him a very important question, and, if he returned the right answer, he would give him a pension of five shillings weekly for life.

" Did you feel," Dr. Snowball shouted, " some mysterious force telling you to get out of the way, that alas ! you never heeded, before you were run into ? "

" No," replied Barnaby, who, for a wonder, had heard the doctor's question, " nothing told I to move."

" What did you feel ? " shouted the doctor angrily.

" Only thee's b—— motor," replied Barnaby.

" You're a stubborn infidel," shouted the doctor, " and I wish your neck was broken. . . . "

At dinner that same evening, when Dr. Snowball rose from his wine to open the door to the ladies, he received a look from the younger of the two that caused him to say to his wife, as he held the door open, " I have something to say to Kitty about my experiments, but she shall soon follow you into the drawing-room, my dear."

Dr. Snowball softly closed the door. He went back to his chair, poured out a glass of port for Miss Kitty and sat her upon his knees.

" He wished to ask her something very important," he said.

The doctor touched his glass to hers and drank to all learned men.

" When we knocked down Barnaby," he said, " do you happen to remember seeing anything else in the road ? "

" Oh, yes, I remember something," replied Miss Kitty,

putting her bare arm round Dr. Snowball's neck so that he could hear her the better, " for there was an adder in the path."

" And what did the adder do when I blew the horn ? " asked Dr. Snowball excitedly.

" It crawled at once into the hedge," replied Miss Kitty, taking Dr. Snowball's gold watch out of his pocket and beginning to play with it.

" It crawled away," said Miss Kitty.

" Which proves that I am right," shouted Dr. Snowball, " for adders are deaf."

As we have hinted before, Dr. Snowball was a grateful man: if anyone was kind enough to help him in his experiments, he would reward him in some way or other. He now kissed Miss Kitty three times in order to show his gratitude. She still played with his gold watch.

" You may have it," said Dr. Snowball. He allowed Kitty to go and opened the door for her.

That same evening Dr. Snowball searched in all the scientific books that he possessed—the greater number came from Germany—for any case that confirmed his new theory, that sound intuitively moves you before you hear it. Dr. Snowball consulted the great Goethe, but found that he only talked about colour and the ways of skylarks in hedges. He placed Goethe on the shelf again. He consulted one book after another, and as each book failed him, he took another glass of port, with a sad sigh. At two o'clock in the morning he decided that Miss Kitty might help him.

He called her down. Miss Kitty entered the room, rubbing her eyes that were moist and shining.

" I am looking for a book," explained Dr. Snowball, " and will you be so good as to help me to find it, as I wish to learn more about noise."

Miss Kitty went sleepily to the bookcase and took down the first book she saw. The doctor watched her excitedly. Miss Kitty wore a red silk dressing-gown. She placed the book upon the table. It was a Bible.

" Now you may go," said Dr. Snowball, seeing what book it was. Miss Kitty lingered a little and went.

Dr. Snowball opened the Bible at the battle of Jericho. He read the page, drained a glass to the author, and wished to call Kitty down again. On second thoughts, however, he didn't

call her. He read the passage again. He was now sure of his discovery ; he was sure that the walls of Jericho fell before they heard the trumpets.

The next day Dr. Snowball decided to try for himself what his horn could do. One thing discovered leads on to another. He meant to experiment as those trumpeters had done with inanimate matter.

Even though Dr. Snowball went to bed so late he awoke fresh and happy. He had a very good digestion, and he knew, as every wise man does, that old port, if it be fruity, never hurts anyone.

Turning a little in his bed, he addressed his wife as Kitty and kissed her.

" Surely you haven't forgotten my name," said Mrs. Snowball.

Dr. Snowball rose : he dressed with his usual precise care and chose a pink tie. At breakfast he invited Miss Kitty to go for a drive with him.

" I have some more experiments to make to-day," he said.

Kitty went to dress ; she put on a dainty coat and her red hat and stood in front of the mirror. She kept Dr. Snowball waiting in the car for an hour and a half, but, having given his watch away the night before, he didn't know how the time went.

In passing under the great elm, Dr. Snowball noticed that Barnaby was standing near and looking up at the tree.

" Stubborn lad," shouted Dr. Snowball, and brushed Barnaby with the wheel to teach him a lesson.

A little further, and in the middle of the lane, there was a stray cow. Before the doctor sounded his horn, the cow moved. Dr. Snowball stopped the car when they met the farmer who was looking for his cow. Dr. Snowball enquired whether the cow was healthy in all its organs.

" There baint much the matter wi' she," replied the man, " only she be as blind as grandmother ! "

Dr. Snowball drove on. When he was out of sight of the man, he kissed Kitty. He drove slowly ; evidently he was thinking of all the good that would come to the world from his experiments.

Near to the railway-station, he became more excited. The road crossed the line and the gates were closed. Dr. Snowball drove fast towards them ; he sounded the horn, and Kitty screamed.

Almost as he touched the gates, they opened as if by magic. The car raced through.

The time of year was September and the sun shone with all its summer heat. The top boughs of the trees were touched with yellow, and everyone who was out was happy. Dr. Snowball was in such excellent spirits that he kissed Kitty again.

Half way down a hill, they came upon a perambulator, that a foolish nursemaid had left in the middle of the road. The baby inside it was fast asleep. Dr. Snowball sounded his horn. The baby shook the perambulator with its cries, but its movement caused its carriage to start going and to overturn in the ditch.

Dr. Snowball ran the car into a shady lane. He took a bank note out of his pocket and presented it to Kitty with his compliments. He held Kitty in his arms and thanked her for being there. . . .

After a happy hour spent in the shady lane, Dr. Snowball drove home. He hoped, he told Kitty, " to make one more experiment."

" I think we have done quite enough for to-day," said Kitty.

In the lane near to Hill House, Barnaby was still watching the great elm, though at a little distance. When the car drew near there was a muffled sound, the earth shook, there was a crash and a roar, and the huge elm fell right across the way in front of the car. Dr. Snowball sounded his horn, the car raced at the tree. Kitty sprang out before the horrid crash came. . . .

" Have you anything to tell me, dear ? " enquired Mrs. Snowball of her dying husband.

Dr. Snowball shook his head.

" A stubborn tree," he murmured.

ASHLEY SAMPSON.

PSYCHOANALYSIS.

WHEN first desire distributed her wealth
Of worth and waste in eyes, and ears, and hands,
I wondered after the God that held me back
From golden windows down the city's strands
At night—and over hills—hanging like lamps
Upon a Christmas Tree. He was as powerful
As the morality of rocks those days
When they return the outward showerful
Of seas—empty and shapeless—raising aloud
Each foam behind their heads; and every air
Deafens and reels. My soul is not less stunned
Than was that shore as I watch from my chair
The curtain's snowstorm—frozen as it falls
Hanging unfinished—without edge or drift;
And pictures crucified about the room
Whose faces hand me back their memory's gift
Like a returning sea whose surging depths
Hold to their property—until the riddle
Forgets itself. The swelling tide of thought
Rises with memory. The prim stools fiddle
Into the mind first; and chairs make answer
Like barking drums. For they have understood
That other world—those two who brim this lake
Of out-poured memory above the wood
Of open tables. They have been wide defence
When as a half-grown child I knelt amid
That nightworn group; and over trembling knees
Received His utterances; and vainly hid
Their memory when prayer had sunk to rest
In benediction; and the upright frames

Of those two chairs were left like fortresses
Abandoned where I hid ; but the wild names
Still swayed about the room their guilty curse
For unremitted sins—that in the night
They should recall my ears with trumpetings
Muffled as bells who cry of heaven's delight
To men in hell. The furniture that speaks
To my senses now amid this dreaming flood
Signals its separated messages
Like harboured ships—each calling in the mood
That it remembers. Thus from their distances
Chime harps ; and trumpets peal in golden cry
While from the depth bubbles a lonely flute
And sings to me forgotten notes. I try
To recollect which are the bells, and know
From whence that mist of violins fills up ;
But I am dumb ; nor can I shake my voice
Into their harmony. Only the unfinished cup
Of each wide chair stands with extended arms
As wave by wave the shining tide drains out.
They gape as land rocks gape when a full sea
Uncovers them and leaves them to the rout
Of wind and sky—naked and washed—to wait
The healing sun. So gape those chairs. My soul
Gapes no less widely as the ocean tide
Withdraws. For it has swept up in its roll
Places of every memory. Yet no !
For now I recognise how I was kept
From drifting out with men in search of pleasure
When half the city prayed and others slept ;
And lights broke out in windows as a crown
Puts on her jewels. They went to their despairs
Of God—and I sat up for them—compelled
By the tremendous terror of those chairs.

ESTHER.

JACOB KRAMER.

PAUL SELVER.

TWO POEMS AND THREE SQUIBS.

CANTICLE IN EARLY SPRING.

THIS delicate day of spring, like a Chopin prelude, mingles
Bursts of rapture by turns with snatches of wistful pain ;
At earliest chill of evening the blood already tingles,—
Andante the day began, but presto the pace of its wane.

Traceless the sun has been quenched, a metal disc in acid,
In the vitriol pool at the base of the bare and glassy sky ;
Smoky blue of the dusk is mottled by the placid
Faint amber halo of street-lamps. Faces float past, and I,

In this hour which tenderly joins sunset with star-rise, travel
Back to when first I trod these pavements. The years between
With their tale of storms and havens have vanished, and I unravel
Shyly the tangled dreams of the things that never have been.

MEDITERRANEAN SONNET.

IT is now three days and nights since the last streak
Of our island coastline foundered amid the haze
Over a sallow sea. In those leaden days
We saw thin wisps of light straggle and leak
From the clouds that ranged to the dark-rimmed horizon ; we saw
Bleak sunsets and desolate dawns, as they had been
In the first week of the world, when they filtered their sheen
On the face of the waters, obeying the earliest law.

But a miracle overnight has changed the cold
Froth-smeared flood to a dappled syrup ; and where
Was a blank sky is a riot of azure and gold ;
Africa's russet earth has spiced the air,
And after to-morrow's nightfall we shall behold
The strange southern tilt of the Great Bear.

DREAMS.

WE shall not dream the grisly dreams that cause
Gasfitters, bishops, hangmen, flunkeys, peers,
Field-marshals and the mob who pass the laws
To wake, pallidly sweating with sudden fears.
But these shall be our dreams: Journeys on decks
Of galleons; frenzied sunsets glazing the sea
With smoulder of spectrums and myriad colour-flecks;
Calm, twilit anchorage beneath the lee
Of magic islands, where we shall possess
All our old loves again in a single night.
In brief, our dreams shall be of such finesse,
That Dr. Freud, hearing thereof, shall write
Their inner meaning in at least a score
Of tomes more choice than any he penned before.

ANACREONTIC.

NOT incunabula nor palimpsest
Can rouse a myriad raptures in me now;
And strophic ecstasies of the possessed
Are empty echoes that I disavow.
For I intently con this crimson script,
This enchiridion of sealed delight,—
The lordly names of potions I have sipped,
—One is the vintage I shall quaff to-night.

ARITHMETICAL PROGRESSION, OR THE BOOM OF SPOOF.

GAMMA at twenty caused a huge to-do
With his first novel. Now he has conceived
His next at thirty. I compare the two,
And murmur: "Why, he'd almost have achieved
A masterpiece, had he but used his pen
For writing novels at the age of ten."

FRÁŇA ŠRÁMEK.

THE FAITHFUL LOVER.

(*Authorised Translation from the Czech by Paul Selver*).

I BELIEVE I knew a man whose love was real. He was gentle and proud, but not cautious enough; and that is how I got to know of the whole occurrence.

It began one Sunday evening in a suburban tavern, where the lower orders used to get tipsy. Six days of labour and misery were left outside the door, and it was for the seventh day to rejoice the heart. Yesterday was consumed amid liquor, and a piano announced that youth escapes, never to return.

And at one table sat a girl, who from dark, spirited eyes gave all men to drink, and there arose, as it were, almost a vapour from her, like the seething of spring-tide soil. She threw back her head and hot laughter dried upon her lips; she laughed for no cause, and there were moments when she was embarrassed by so much blood which surged into her face.

And suddenly she had a feeling as if somebody had taken her head in his white, narrow hands, and forced her to look into two tenderly smiling eyes.

It was Maran who was looking at her.

He was different from the other men; he had a gentle face, and a delicate smile, and Lina felt in great embarrassment.

It seemed to her as if the other men said with their eyes that she was pretty, and that they wanted to kiss her and . . . and hug and crush her in their arms; she used to feel hot at these glances. But that was altogether quite easy to understand, and she was not angry with the men on that account; for really she did not know what else the men could want of her . . . .

But these two eyes said something quite different.

For they also said that, but they said it as if in sorrow; as if it pained them to have to say it.

But that, of course, she did not understand. And she was annoyed at not understanding it.

She bent over towards her married sister.

" Look . . . that fellow's eating me up with his eyes . . . "

She tried to give a pert laugh, so that Maran should hear.

So that he should know she didn't care a rap for men with studious faces and solemn eyes. Yes, didn't even care a rap. Girls from the suburbs don't bother their heads with such nonsense. Nobody has toyed with their sense of shame, and the mystery of women has been revealed to them amid coarse words and wanton, tickling laughter. And besides that, she, Lina, is a shrewd girl. She had learnt this and that from her companions where she worked. Every moment one of her companions would receive a present—a hat, earrings, something or other . . . There was one who could even boast of a gold watch . . . and she isn't particularly pretty either, is Anda . . . some men are really most free-handed . . . and . . . and for such a trifle, which, after all, is by no means altogether unpleasant . . . And then, too, Lina has such a thirst in her blood, and wants to enjoy things very, very much ; well, perhaps to-morrow or the day after, something pleasant would happen to her too . . .

And she looked at Maran, as if she wanted to tell him with her eyes : Yes, that's Lina, my good fellow !

But she could not manage it, and her eyes did not succeed in escaping, nor could her long lashes contrive to hide her great confusion ; it was as if Maran were shaking red-hot coals on to her breast.

" I say, that's dreadful, dreadful . . . "

And Maran pressed his friend's arm tight. He was very pale and his eyes pierced into painful depths.

His friend observed him and Lina with surprise.

" Do you know her ? "

" No . . . "

" Well, then . . . what's dreadful ? "

Maran's lips quivered as if his mouth were full of cold.

" Poor girl . . . she'll have her human feelings abased a thousand times . . . "

His friend seemed not to understand, and wanted to ask more questions.

But Maran only waved his hand and paid.

Outside there was a wind-swept night, the flames in the

gas-lamps were jerking like convulsive tongues in mute mouths, which cannot and dare not speak. The cold pierced to the marrow ; one felt a desire to breathe like this wind. It was as though somewhere heavy showers of human tears had been falling . . . And the pavement was wet with something like the sweat of a man lying in death-agony . . .

His friend burst out laughing.

" What are you looking at, Maran ? The stars aren't shining . . . "

And Maran repeated mechanically :

" The stars aren't shining . . . "

Suddenly he stopped and listened in the direction of the tavern from which they had come.

" Do you hear ? "

" What ? "

" Someone was calling for help."

" Calling ? I didn't hear. Besides, that's the business of the police."

Maran seemed to be laboriously thinking about something.

" The police, the police . . . If I were to go up to the first two policemen we meet, and say : There's someone in danger yonder . . . There's a woman being made the victim of a crime. They'll take her out to be crucified, and she'll go with them singing, because they've made her drunk so that she should think she's going to meet with pleasures and delights."

His friend interrupted him with a dry laugh.

" Oh, I see ! O, du Schmerzenskind . . . ! "

He stood with legs apart, stretched out his open hand towards Maran, and said with cynical solemnity :

" Well, keep it up . . . A word's enough. Speak, and I'll save her."

Maran's whole face was filled with a kind of terror ; his eyes grew rigid with an extraordinary amazement.

Suddenly he turned away with an abrupt movement and departed without a word. His friend tried to catch him up. But Maran began to run away.

* * *

A few days later there was much laughter among the girls.

" And he kissed your hand ? "

" Yes."

And Lina drew up her whole body in a theatrical manner.

" Yes, here . . . And he said that, that . . . "

But she could not remember what it was he said ; so she told them something else.

" He said he'd like to kiss me on a place where nobody had kissed me before . . . "

" Hi, hi, hi."

" Ha, ha, ha . . . "

The whole premises reeked with laughter, like a cheap perfume.

" Just fancy, a place . . . "

" Well, after all, with Lina it could still be managed, I mean a place like that. But Anda . . . or Betyna, say, if a young man was to ask them for such a thing, they'd really be dreadfully puzzled . . . "

" But if she was to think hard, Lina could tell them . . . what's happened to her innocence . . . "

Lina felt the blood rushing into her face ; but she kept her control and curled her lip in an impudent blasé smile.

" Hm, she's not so babyish as . . . as . . . Betyna, for instance, to keep a list of all the men who're a bit forward . . . or to remember the numbers of the rooms in such and such a hotel, where . . . Yes, and let them bear it well in mind, Lina's too careful about those kind of things . . . "

She said it quite steadily ; there seemed hardly any doubt that she had had such highly-coloured experiences.

But Betyna grew indignant.

" Just fancy, how soppy . . . And that's what the fathead said to you. Come, let's hear . . . "

" No, Lina won't tell . . . "

" Look at that now, she won't tell. Well, I only hope she won't be taken down a peg or two before long."

But Lina said no more. Somehow she felt almost sad. Two eyes were looking at her, and these two eyes were full of sorrow. No, he mustn't look at her like that, it upsets her. Let him go to the other girls, to the educated, dressed-up creatures, if he wants to carry on as though he had toothache ; perhaps they like that. She was fond of life, and didn't know why she should be sad. And, anyhow, let him laugh too. She'd tell him that in the evening. He must laugh, or . . . Yes, she wouldn't let herself be bored . . . What's he got to do

with her soul? Why didn't he talk about her lips? Suppose he wanted to kiss her that evening . . . Oh, she'd be glad to hold out her lips to him, and . . . and . . . if he wanted more? Well, yes . . . he'd have shining eyes, and she'd throw her arms round his neck . . . If Betyna had an idea of how she had lied a moment ago, and of what an inexperienced girl she really was . . . . . Two eyes were looking at her, and she felt as if her heart were sweating a blood-like dew. . . . But those were not eyes like Maran's. Two shameless, slimy eyes with a dark, muttering desire in them. . . .

And in the evening when he waited for her, she told him about it.

—That he was always sad, and never said anything nice to her.

—Well, if that would please her . . .

—Hm, she . . .

For an instant or so she hesitated.

—She didn't like sad people.

—Indeed? But she should believe him when he vowed to her by all that was dearest to him in the world, that he would so much like to be jolly, devilish jolly, if only . . . if only she did not make him so sad.

—She? Well, did you ever . . .

—Yes, she. . . . Did she know that she was threatened by a great danger?

—No, she certainly didn't.

—If he could stand with open arms in front of all the pitfalls to which she was blindly hurrying. . . .

—What? Pitfalls? No, she simply couldn't understand it. . . .

She looked round at all the men they met with, and she kindled her eyes at their glances. She offered herself to them all, as if he were not there.

He wanted to say something, but his tongue died of anguish in his mouth. His mouth was full of suffering and shame, like a lump of black bread soaked with tears.

It was not until they reached the house that he said to her:

"Perhaps after all I don't love you much, or else I'd probably kill you. . . . "

It seemed to him as if it were not he who was speaking; so strange was the sound of his voice.

Yes, perhaps he had not spoken at all, for her face was quite calm.

There was nobody in the street ; his heart began to babble foolishly.

" Why don't you like me ? "

" I do like you."

She said that without reflection or hesitation, with such horrible composure. So simply had she managed to settle " this business."

Maran understood ; it was terrible.

* * *

Sometimes when he used to wait for her, and she was already coming towards him, he would have liked to run away.

He was frightened at something about which her eyes could not keep silent ; yes, there was no doubt that the dreadful thing had already happened, and her eyes would be full of slippery laughter.

She came ; evening was in the streets, and the people were all somehow white beneath the gas-lamps ; even she was white, but with dark flames in her eyes and with a red thirst on her lips.

" You've been so long coming to-day . . . "

She laughed.

But this laughter of hers might have some meaning ; this thought beat on his mind like a whip and the whole street together with Lina laughed in his face.

He was unhappy to the point of committing some folly.

" Perhaps someone kept you back—— "

" Maybe."

And again that laughter.

It burnt upon his tongue ; he had to speak.

" You were at the theatre the night before last ? "

" Yes."

" And after the theatre . . . " He suddenly stopped speaking, and hastily began to turn up the collar of his overcoat.

A moment passed before he attempted to continue, but his mouth uttered only a kind of moan.

He laughed oddly and coughed for a moment.

" I've caught cold, you know . . . and it makes talking difficult."

And again he coughed for a moment. Then he said in quite an unusual voice :

" You must have a lovely body . . I'd like to sleep with you."

He bent down to her, his face twitched, and he kissed her on the neck.

" That's the way to do it, eh ? Even I know a thing or two, ha, ha. . . . "

Her gait began to sway, there was something urchin-like in her, and her lips pouted as if for a soft whistling.

And Maran clapped his hands, clung to Lina's arm, got into step with her and tried to walk just as swayingly.

" And it's a good thing. . . . It's sensible and everything else is silly. . . . What does it matter who kissed you the night before last ? Or last night ? I shan't ask, and I'll kiss, too. . . . And you'll like him and me as well, eh ? You're a sensible girl, Lina, a very sensible girl. Perhaps there'll be a third one to-morrow and you'll like him, too, ha, ha. . . . "

He again kissed her on the neck, and laughed oddly ; then he said hoarsely :

" Will you come to see me on Sunday afternoon ? "

She did not even think it over, but nodded assent. She simply nodded assent. There was no need to think anything over ; it was quite natural, and she nodded assent.

A kind of stammering sound stirred in his breast.

It seemed to him as if he ought to be glad, very glad ; but his heart was full of shame and humiliation.

* * *

I already knew Lina—Maran had previously introduced me to her. My own view of myself is that I am not altogether exacting in my attitude towards what is known as feminine virtue ; that is my own view, and possibly it is right. There have been women who deceived me ; I smile indulgently when I recall it. There are a number of women whom one can hardly expect to be faithful ; I know from experience that with some of them it is quite impossible. And there are men who want a woman to be faithful to them ; then they should not go to women who cannot achieve it. And Lina ? It was awkward that Maran should have fallen in love just with her.

And so it was a Sunday afternoon in March. A marvellous day that made the heart ring. The breeze was like a fluttering

kiss, and the sky sloped down into the streets like a hanging blossom. The streets babbled, the warmth increased to intoxication. I stood before the house ready to spend the whole afternoon in rambling about. There must have been a garden near by, and in the garden a blackbird was twittering. The street was full of noise, but yet you could hear the blackbird. I listened to the blackbird, and the sun fondled me with veils of light ; my heart tingled as if stroked by a woman's fluttering tresses.

And as I stood there, Lina came by. I greeted her ; and where was she going ? To Maran.

" Where ? "

" To Mr. Maran."

It was a fine spring day ; I felt happy and would have liked to press this girl's hand ; she said it so without embarrassment, with such full relish, that she was going to her lover ; such a thing as that is certainly stronger and lovelier than virtue.

From some upper window a small piece of paper was thrown out ; it fluttered and wriggled about in front of our eyes, fell right between us, and we both clutched at it.

Our hands touched, and without knowing why, we both held each other's hands and laughed exuberantly, without reason, like little children ; she held the piece of paper in her hand and I had to force it open. Our fingers became entangled, the people looked round at us, but my heart bowed down to her half-open, wanton lips, my heart was full of spring-tide and full of some fervid entreaty.

At last I caught hold of the paper and that made me laugh all the more.

On the paper was written three times vertically in pencil : yes, yes, yes.

Yes, yes, yes ! A fervid affirmation to someone.

To whom ?

The sun was aiming all his rays at my breast, and these rays glowingly affirmed : yes, yes, yes !

And I did not know why, but without having any special intention in my mind, I said :

" Won't you come up with me ? "

It seemed as if she were just a little surprised ; anyhow her eyes expressed a kind of wonderment.

But my heart bowed down to her lips and breathed its fervid entreaty upon her face.

At last, yes, she would come up.

I led her up the stairs into my room, as if from the street outside I had gathered up the spring breeze and were carrying it home.

I could swear that I had no special intentions; it just occurred to me at the moment to invite her in, to show her my room, to listen to her laughter in my room, and to make all the objects there more festive and cheerful by letting her spring tide gaze wander over them.

I asked her to take off her hat, and she took off her hat.

I sat down opposite her, and half-closed my eyes at the warm breeze which was wafted from them.

Many books were scattered about on the table, and that filled her with astonishment.

"What a lot of books . . . and do you learn from all of them?"

"Whatever made you think that? Why, I'm known as a regular idler. Besides, it seems to me that I know everything."

I suppose I hardly looked like a man who knew everything, and she laughed.

Her laughter made my blood too thick and red, I suddenly did not know what to say, and my mouth was full of a dumb sweetness.

I did not know what I was saying, but I only heard her rather muffled voice.

"Look how my hands are trembling; they would like to pluck flowers . . ."

And again her laughter. And my blood thick and red.

Outside, the spring was glowingly affirming: yes, yes, yes!

"And my lips are trembling too, look; they want to kiss your mouth . . ."

And she offered scarcely any resistance. . . .

* * *

"I'll see you out. Where are you going now?"

"Why, I told you . . . to Mr. Maran."

My head grew cold, something was hurting my forehead. My face must have looked stupid with astonishment.

"Why, I told you . . ."

" Oh, yes, yes . . . I remember . . . I only. But tell me, you're fond of Maran ? "

" Well, that's . . . you know . . . "

But she did not say what it was, she only shrugged her shoulders and left it at that. That's how it was. . . . Yes, I understood. . . .

The March sun was shining, but my heart was suddenly cold. Behind the bright and pleasant faces of people there seemed to lurk deceptive purposes.

I bought Lina a bunch of violets.

" In gratitude for the delightful visit . . . " I said, with an ugly laugh. I knew that I was unjust, but I gave an ugly laugh.

I reflected for a moment ; my thoughts were so bitter.

" But I'd like to ask you a favour, Lina. . . . Of course, my kisses have left no traces, I'm not so romantic as that ; but, still, I'd rather you didn't go to Maran to-day. I don't know how to put it . . . but judge for yourself. It would lead too closely to dishonesty ; it's better not to go that way without taking care. . . . You see, I know Maran . . . after what's happened . . . well, to put it briefly, don't go to-day anyhow . . . "

She was utterly unable to understand it, but at last she agreed.

We parted, and I went to Maran myself.

It was foolish, but I went as one who had an evil conscience.

His face grew horrified as I entered. He probably thought it was Lina.

" It's you ? "

He did not even ask me to take a seat ; he crouched down again in a corner of the settee, and lapsed into silence.

I started talking, only for the sake of saying something.

" The sun is shining, and you're moping at home. . . . "

He looked at me as if he did not understand and remained silent.

After a moment he asked :

" What's the time ? "

" About four . . . "

" Four, you say ? "

He suddenly fixed his eyes upon me with a kind of violence and said in a parched voice :

" It's too late now . . . "

My head again grew cold, and my forehead hurt me, but I managed to ask :

" Were you waiting for someone ? "

" Was I waiting for someone," he asks, " was I waiting for someone ! Kick me, kick me like a dog, if every vein in my face doesn't tell you and betray to you that I was waiting . . . "

His whole face gleamed strangely.

" Oh, how I have waited ! I kissed the threshold there, so that she should come in over my kisses . . . "

His voice gave way ; he only whispered :

" You know, Lina was to have come . . . "

He jumped up from the settee, stood in front of me, and laid his hands heavily upon my shoulders ; his face glowed with extraordinary enthusiasm.

" And she has not come. And you think I'm cursing her for not coming . . . you, you fool ! She's spotless, that's why she hasn't come. She promised and her promise was a punishment for my impudence. Jirko, I begged of her like a lackey : Come to me . . . to my room, ha, ha, come . . . and to think that I wasn't strangled for letting such words pass my evil lips. But she hasn't come. She has punished the lackey, with her pure, spotless radiant soul she has blinded his eyes. I'd gratefully sacrifice all my blood in return for that. . . . "

I quickly withdrew before his enthusiasm.

Yes, I remember, I really ought to go to so-and-so ; how could I have forgotten it ?

And I went. Or rather I fled.

Sometimes, when we talk about love, I say : I think I knew a man whose love was real. But as I say it, I twist my lips oddly. . . .

INCIDENT IN A DRAWING-ROOM.

OH, lapse of taste! Someone is moved—is stirred—
Is vulgarly emphatic! Like a beggar
Uncovering his sores before the eye
Of some fastidious dandy, he reveals
Emotions that disturb the equipoise,
And raises issues not to be dismissed
With ready epigrams. Each well-bred back
Stiffens in disapproval: all retire
Within themselves: a tense, embarrassed lull
Awaits apology . . . Then, suddenly,
The accustomed laughter breaks and ripples out,
Crackling like flame, spreading throughout the room:—
And all is well; tradition reigns once more.

NIGHT-LIFE.

THE useful and domestic cat
Adorning the familial mat,
Now at the fall of purple dusk,
Suffers a change. He sheds the husk
Of civilisation, and returns
To his primeval self. He burns
With atavistic nomadry,
And yearns to be abroad and free;
Nor longer loves the household lars,
But only seeks the cruel stars . . .
Now he is in the pallid gleam
His fur unsleeks, his features seem
To assume a diabolic leer,
His eyes expand, he cocks an ear;
And all the urbanity of day
Turns to an ardent lust for prey . . .
But when comes dawn, with slaked desire,
He sits again before the fire.

SOME OF THEM (THREE OR FOUR).

I.

"BUT are you sure?"

"Of course I am."

"I have a feeling something will go wrong."

"How? At half past ten my husband goes to his office as usual. At eleven you say Sullivan will bring his car here for us. Surely you don't mean to repent at that eleventh hour?"

"No. Don't say that. It hurts. Could I ever repent being happy with you? But I have a presentiment . . ."

"Oh, your presentiments!"

"They have a habit of coming true."

"Nonsense! What can happen? Where is the flaw in my plan?"

"I can't see any. So far it seems perfect in every detail. But to-morrow something we have not thought of, something simple, will happen. . . ."

"Well, if you have made up your mind about the matter, good-bye. Go away and tell Sullivan you won't need him here to-morrow."

"No, no! Please! I didn't mean it. You will come with me to-morrow, won't you, at eleven?"

"Where?"

"To the loveliest spot on earth, where we will make our home."

"Tell me about the home."

"It shall be in a tropical garden. We shall approach it through an avenue where last night's carpet is still red under the royal Poinciana which overhead lifts its flowers of flame to greet the morning sun. The mango trees will all be flowering. On the bank of a sacred lotus lake we shall sit in a lovely bower, where the voluble clerodendron boasts its wealth of scarlet and white and green, and the violet passion flower breathes its per-

fume all around. Ixoras bloom there through the year, white and cream and all the shades of red. Giant crinums flourish there, with great flowers, pink and white, studded with scent glands clear as crystal. The little plants by their side bear flowers with a perfume so delicious that large dark beetles come from all sides and eat up the petals as they open to the evening's embrace. I shall save these flowers from their enemies, and the glory of the evening shall be theirs, for they shall adorn my dear love's hair ; and the morning's glory shall belong to the champak that springs from the bosom of the earth, arrayed in purple and silver and gold to greet the first rose of the dawn."

"That our *home?* Chaotic I call it—like yourself. I don't think even fancy can take me there, let alone Sullivan's car. If that is the place we are bound for—why, there is a clearer definition about those presentiments of yours. I begin to share them now. . . . Whatever is that ? "

A peremptory whistle shrilled in from the street.

"Why, it is only Sullivan. You know his habit of whistling his thoughts. I suppose he is getting impatient."

"I don't like that whistle. It sounded like a bad omen. I have a feeling something dreadful is going to happen."

"Presentiments ? Why you ridiculed . . ."

"Oh, go away, please ! . . ."

"Just one . . ."

"Will you never go away ? If you love me . . ."

She ran to the front door, he following her. As she reached it, the door was opened from outside by her husband.

"Here I am again, my dear. Got a telephone message—Going away, Simpson ? Do stay and have tea with us. Can't ? That's too bad. Do drop in again to-morrow, will you ? "

When they were alone, the husband and wife faced each other.

II.

"Well ? "

"Well ? "

"What was he here for ? "

"To tell me he was in love with me."

"And you stand here and calmly say it ? "

"Let us sit down. Why should I not say it calmly ? How else would you have me say it ? "

" It is not the manner . . ."

" Oh, well, I may not say it. But can you prevent me thinking ? "

" I know. That is just what I object to. Was this the fidelity you swore . . ."

" Are you trying to hold me to those idle secondhand words ? You, with one wife dead and another divorced ? "

" It was my misfortune to have lost my first wife. As to the divorce, was there anything about it dishonourable to either of us ? Fancy you raising that point, after the life you led your first husband, and his death."

" You can never know anything about it. So leave that subject alone. I was not blaming you for what happened to your wives—I was only emphasizing the fact that you had one wife at least before me. I had a husband before you. If we had held to our first marriage vows, neither of us could have married again."

" Why not ? "

" Is marrying me your way of keeping faith with your first wife ? "

" But she is dead."

" Your second wife is still alive."

" Don't be stupid. You know we are divorced."

" She is alive all the same."

" But I am neither dead nor divorced from you."

" I can't see what difference that makes."

" So you see no harm in having two husbands at the same time ? "

" Time enough to look for harm when such a thing becomes possible. As it is, there is no such thing as polygamy."

" How do you make that out ? "

" I shall put it very plain. Sexually, it is not possible for anyone to possess more than one of the other sex at one and the same time. As to successive occasions, I don't see what difference death makes, and still less a formality like divorce."

" What opinions for a woman to express ! "

" If you men have stuck fast in antiquated ideas, and rendered yourselves incapable of progress, we women have not. We dare, and think, and speak, and act."

" It is absurd, and a lie, to say that death and divorce make no difference."

" Did not you and your wife come together again after the divorce ? "

" How about death ? "

" If your dead wife could return to-day, would you not have her again ? "

" Marriage is not a matter of sex alone, and love is always single in its object."

" What nonsense ! Is there a limit to love ? You love me now. Have you stopped loving your dead wife ? Love lasts even beyond the grave. And be honest—don't you still love your divorced wife ? I don't mind—it would make no difference to me, even if you weren't divorced. You might marry again, if I were to go away from you ; but your love for me will never flag ! "

" I can't bear this any longer. I don't care how the argument stands. You shall not belong to another while you are still my wife."

" Bullying ? Talking of rights ? And force ? Do you dream you can stop me if I mean to leave you ? To-morrow, at eleven . . ."

" I know I can't stop you ; and you know I won't. Why weren't you frank with me before this, and told me you loved me no longer ? "

" How could I ? I love you still, and shall love you always."

" Simpson ? "

" I can't prevent his being in love with me."

" But you . . ."

" Surely I can like as many people as I please. I like Simpson ; he is so poetic in his silliness. You are different : yours is a heavy, philosophic, fifteen thousand a year stupidity, like an archbishop's. Sullivan's stupidity is comprised, with his wisdom, in whistling. Each has qualities absent in the others."

" Don't evade the question. Do you, or do you not, love Simpson ? "

" I don't. Why else did I telephone to you to come home at once as I was entertaining a lover ? "

" *Your* message, was it ? Well, I . . . I don't know what to think . . . The voice wasn't yours."

" Of course not. I didn't want to scare him away. It was Sullivan you heard."

III.

That night his sleep was troubled by dreams. Telephones rang on all sides of him. Come home at once. Entertaining a lover. All his wives were entertaining a lover. All of them at the same time. All the lovers had the same face, his own. Three wives at the same time. Simultaneous polygamy. Impossible, but true.

All the three wives were claiming him, pulling him down towards themselves—down. His first wife pulled him with her cold dead hand on his heart. They loved each other still. He must keep faith with her. Marriage vows bound them together. Forever and ever. He loved her still. If she could come back to-day, would he not have her again? She was calling to him now, bidding him come to her. The other women had no right to him. Business, too, what was the use of it? Love alone mattered, not even life, nor death. With her hand on his heart, she was pulling him, towards the grave, and he was falling—hopelessly, helplessly falling.

His second wife, too, was pulling him to her. He was hers. Hadn't she saved him from suicide, given him the urge again to lead in business? But the business was his, not hers. A wife's sphere is her home. Incompatibility. Honourable divorce. Came together again after the divorce. Loved her still, in spite of divorce. Hers he was, and she was pulling him down, down to her humdrum home life, down. . . . .

Her husband, too, was pushing him down to her. She had to have him back, divorce or no divorce. Who was her husband, he or the other? If we kept to our marriage vows, we could never marry again. Successive polygamy. Can't simultaneously have two husbands. Simpson and himself. Come home at once. Entertaining a lover. What was Simpson there for? In love with her. Stand there and calmly say it. Women dare and say and act. To-morrow at eleven. She shan't belong to another while she is still his wife. Can't stop her if she means to go. No harm in two husbands at the same time. No such thing as polygamy. Can love many people at once. Each had his special type of silliness. The very poetry of Simpson's silliness. Only likes Simpson—doesn't love him. Why else did she 'phone? Not her voice, but Sullivan's. Why the message, if she didn't love Simpson? Letters waiting to be answered. Engagements

left uncancelled. What will the people say? Crowds of them round him, pointing at him, whispering, calling him names. Bigamist. Trigamist. Preposterous arguments stifled him, crushed him down—down—

One of them was rolling him out of bed. It was her dead husband's ghost! Whose wife was she? What right had he to that bed? Rights. Enforce them. The ghost was turning him out of the bed. He rolled right out, struck the ground, and woke.

He heard his wife say, "Take care. You will fall. . . . Are you hurt?"

"No, not hurt; only confused."

"What about? . . . Where are you going?"

"Don't detain me, dear. I have calculated, and I have lost. You go with Simpson."

"I am not going with Simpson; and even if I do, you will not have lost . . . only calculated wrong. Come here."

But he walked out of the room.

IV.

The next morning, answering the door himself, he took Simpson completely by surprise.

"Good morning, Simpson. Come in. So glad you turned up to time."

Simpson's worst prognostications had come true. His mind became incapable of other thought. He remained standing on the threshold.

"What's the matter with you? Don't be embarrassed."

He dragged Simpson in.

"Sit down, my dear fellow. Have a cigarette."

Mechanically, Simpson obeyed.

"It is all right, Simpson. I know all about it, and I want to put you at your ease."

The worst torture could not last forever. Simpson prepared himself for it.

"Don't sit there like a hypnotised rabbit. I am not going to eat you. Cheer up, man! She is getting ready to go with you in a few minutes."

Poor Simpson stared helplessly. What was the meaning of it all?

" Haven't you a word to say ? You do look a fool, sitting there staring. Wake up ! If there is one thing I object to in the whole business, it is my wife's lover being a fool."

" Let me go. Prolonging the torture can't add to your satisfaction."

" Oh, you—you still don't believe I bear you no grudge ? I don't ; not the slightest. How could you help being in love with her, any more than myself ? "

Was he crazy, or was this some new move ? Simpson looked the question.

" No, Simpson, I am not mad. Since last evening I have thought a great deal. I have realised the difference between my being her husband and her being my wife. She is a great woman, Simpson, greater than me, and greater than you. You will fare no better than myself. If she wishes to go away, nothing can stop her. I certainly can't, and I shall not try to. Have you read ' Candida ? ' Or are you too busy writing your own books to read other people's ? "

Simpson's countenance showed he remembered Candida's choice. So this was the game ? One humiliation not sufficing, was he to be dragged into the dust before her as well ?

" Had I not better retire, at this stage at least ? "

" No Simpson. I have thought it all out, and you must stay. There is no other way to settle the matter, and it must be settled now, once for all."

" As in the story, you are sure to win."

" I don't know. You are a poet, and appeal to her imagination."

" But you have a solid foundation in life, and powers of argument ; and no doubt, methods in reserve . . ."

" All these don't matter, Simpson. If they did, to-day's situation could not have arisen. With women the emotions alone count ; and I have too long sacrificed my heart to my head . . ."

" May I make one last appeal to you, not to create a scene ? Think how awkward it would be for your wife, however fine it might seem for the Candida of the play."

" I am glad you show her such consideration, Simpson ; but you need not be so anxious to . . . Ah ! I understand you now ; you dare not face her. But you shall, for now I know I shall be the winner. She will never choose the man who is

afraid when she has made up her mind to have him ! She shall choose between us now, at once ! "

A shrill derisive whistle came in from the street, followed by a man's laughter, and the sound of a car being started. Simpson went to the window. . . .

" What is the matter, Simpson ? What is it ? "

" Look ! "

The car was disappearing, with her and Sullivan.

" Sullivan ? Sullivan ? I have been blind ! "

* * *

" No, Simpson. There is no use following them. There is no knowing her plans, much less thwarting them. She has made her choice, but in a way we were too self-absorbed to see. We are the rejected, and Sullivan has the laugh of us. But we can afford to smile, for hers will be the last laugh. Yes. She was right. We calculated wrong. And she said we hadn't lost."

EUROPEAN ANTHOLOGY

II.

JEAN RICHEPIN.

EDMONDO DE AMICIS.

RAINER MARIA RILKE.

BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON.

MILAN CURCIN.

KAREL TOMAN.

MICHAEL KUZMIN.

BALLADE OF VILLON.

(*From the French.*)

KING-POET thou, in torn array,
Villon, O master, prowling wight,
Wine-bibber, who with wenches lay,
And rang such joyous chimes aright,
Sad ponderer in motley plight,
The verses thine ill-fame could make
A sacred radiance ignite,
Rapscallion, vagrant, genius, rake.

The fellows of thy choice were gay,
And thou would'st cram their pouches tight,
And this, thy wandering astray,
Thou almost camest to requite
Upon the gibbet, warning sight
For all to see, for rain to slake
And soak and pulp with sudden blight,
Rapscallion, vagrant, genius, rake.

Then let the pettifoggers bray
And prick thee with their needle's bite,
For thou can'st spew on all their say;
Margot the slut was thy delight,
Yet even as her neophyte,
The blessed star thou could'st awake,
Which leaves thy tatters sheen-bedight,
Rapscallion, vagrant, genius, rake.

ENVOI.

Prince, raise thy banner on the height,—
Who denies thee, damnation take.
King-poet thou, without a mite,
Rapscallion, vagrant, genius, rake.

EDMONDO DE AMICIS.

CRESCIT EUNDO . . .

(*From the Italian*).

GREAT is his talent,—none can answer nay,
But speaking now with every due respect,
(You know each writer has his own defect)
His style's a little . . . heavy, shall we say.

Some call him pompous. I agree, he may
Be pompous now and then, and incorrect;
He has no other fault I can detect.
How sad he has no feeling to display.

In fancy and in thought he does not lack,
Although he has no taste, and often, too,
Is rather . . . vapid, rather . . . dull and slack.

He does have flashes . . . hardly as a rule;
But Lord! he steals without the least ado.
I know not whether he's more knave than fool.

RAINER MARIA RILKE.

LEGEND OF THE CLOUD.

(*From the German*).

THE sound of parting day was mellow,
And like a hammer-blow it sank.
The moon, a melon, golden-yellow,
Basked on a sloping grassy bank.

A cloudlet sought to munch it greedily,
And it contrived an inch or two
Of the bright orb to snatch, and speedily
With bulging cheeks began to chew.

Long on its truant track it drifted
And clad itself in bright array;—
Then night the golden fruit uplifted:
Black grew the cloud and ebbed away.

SIN AND DEATH.

(*From the Norwegian*).

SIN and death, the sisters twain,
Twain, twain,
Sat together where dawn grew red.
Sister, wed, and dwelling I gain,
Gain, gain
In thy house, death said.

Sin was wedded, and death was fain,
Fain, fain,
Danced with glee on the bridal day:
But at night the bridegroom she had ta'en,
Ta'en, ta'en,
In a shroud she bore him away.

Sin watched alone in tearful rue,
Rue, rue,
Death sat yonder where dawn grew red:
Him thou lovest, I love too,
Too, too,—
He is here, death said.

OFF THE TRACK.

(*From the Serbian*).

NOW we have what is known as autumn, *i.e.*,
" The sere and yellow leaf," etc., has begun to fall,
And nearly every branch
Has a poet apiece underneath it ;
He stands and watches
How nature " is dying " and he follows her funeral.

I also once tried
To indulge in this poetical custom
And to mourn my very hardest,
Yes, and to lament in rhythm.

But above me the sky was bright,
And my mirthful heart laughed at my sorrow ;
So that with the best will in the world
I could not detect any signs of death
In nature.

On the contrary, I am glad when the leaves fall
And in hundreds of tints
From red to dark brown
Cover the ground,
And the sun, falling upon it,
Weaves a carpet.

EDEN.

(*From the Czech*).

IN spiral track we ranged about
The tree that was forbidden us.
The fruits thereof were fragrant in the sunshine,
And we were hungry.

Temptation glittered in the woman's gaze
And yearning set her hands aquiver.
—O thou wise serpent, I am fond of thee,
Come, tell us more about the evil god.

Why does he let us wander famished?
Why gave he potent scent to fruits
When he forbade them us?

Go, tell unto thy god my hatred of him.
And we are also gods? I thank thee, sage.
My dusky Eve! O velvet-lissom body!

MICHAEL KUZMIN.

SONGS OF ALEXANDRIA.

(*From the Russian*).

I.

I QUESTIONED the wise men of the globe :
" Wherefore shines the sun ?
Wherefore blows the wind ?
Wherefore are people born ? "

The wise men of the globe answered :
" The sun shines in order that
Corn may ripen for food,
And that people may die of the plague.
The wind blows in order that
It may escort ships to the distant harbour,
And that it may overwhelm caravans with sand.
People are born in order that
They may depart this life,
And that from them others may be born for death."

" Why, then, have the gods brought all this about ? "
" In order that
They might instil in you the desire
To ask idle questions."

II.

Sun, O sun,
Divine Ra-Helios,
In thee rejoice the hearts of emperors and heroes,
Unto thee neigh the sacred steeds,
Unto thee are chanted hymns in Heliopolis ;
When thou shinest,
Lizards creep forth upon the boulders,
And boys proceed with laughter
To bathe in the Nile.
Sun, O sun,
I am but a pale scrivener, a library hermit,
Yet I love thee, sun, no less
Than the sunburnt sailor
Reeking of fish and salt water,
And no less than his seasoned heart
Exults
When thou majestically risest from the ocean,
Trembles also mine.
When your dusty but flaming rays
Glide through the narrow window by the ceiling
Upon the written sheet,
And my thin sallow hand
Designing in cinnobar the first letter of a hymn unto thee,
O sun, Ra-Helios !

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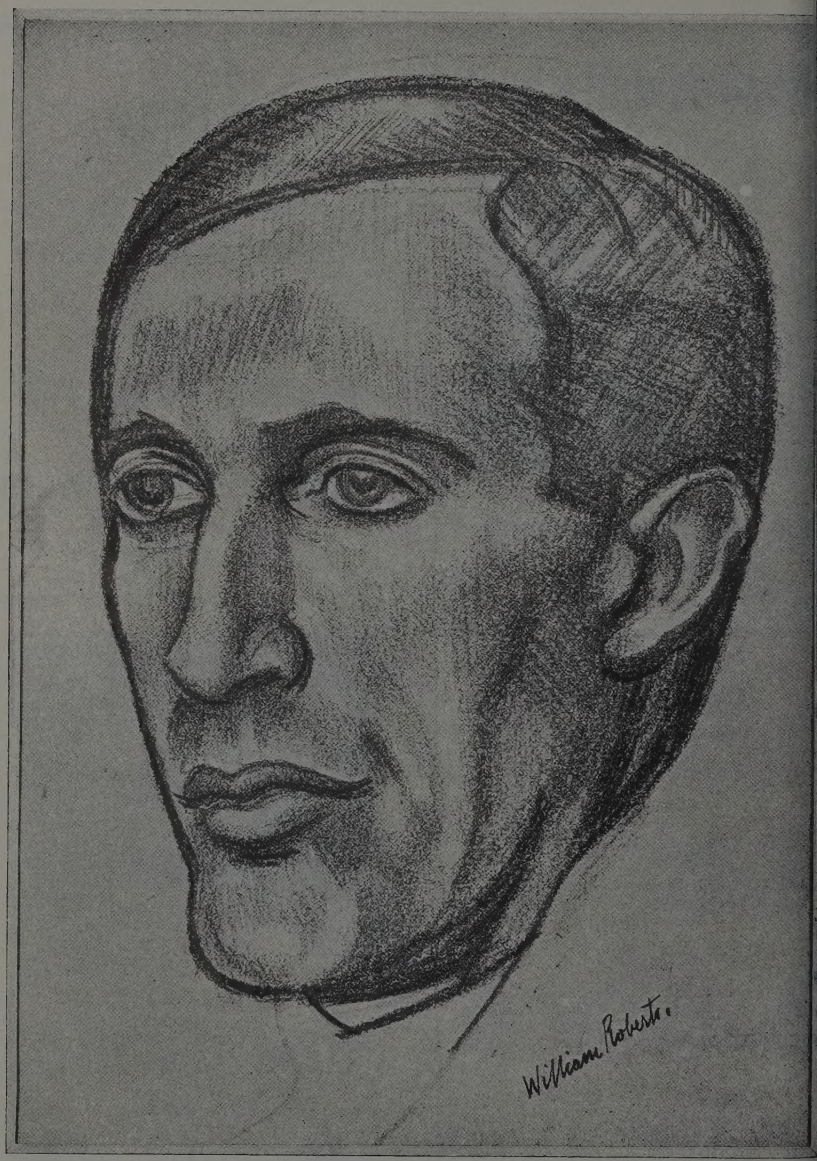

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